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Victories redraw map of Bosnia

Ian Traynor in Sarajevo and Julian Borger in Zagreb

BOSNIAN government troops are redrawing the map of their country following a series of sweeping victories that have driven a wedge into the Serb heartland and put tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians to flight.

On Sunday the Bosnian army was reported to have scythed through Serb lines, capturing the rebel stronghold of Sanski Most. Its fall was confirmed by Bosnian-Croatian military sources, who said it was captured by the mainly Muslim Fifth Corps, based in Bihac. The Fifth Corps also captured Bosanska Krupa.

United States and United Nations officials expressed doubt that the Bosnian government would now accept the 51 per cent of the country allocated to the Muslim-Croat Federation under the peace plan.

Asked if the advance would harm the peace plan, the US envoy, Richard Holbrooke, said in Zagreb: "I'm sure it will have some effect. But that's not my judgment. You can draw your own conclusions." But a White House Bosnia specialist, Alexander Vershbow, later said: "Given the state of play on the battlefield, the Bosnian government is not immediately drawn to the idea of a country-wide cessation of hostilities."

Meanwhile, Nato and UN commanders gave Bosnian Serbs a further 72 hours respite from Nato bombing to complete the withdrawal of their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo, after they found the Serbs had shown initial compliance.

"It is our common judgment that the Bosnian Serbs have shown a substantial start towards withdrawing their heavy weapons beyond the limits of the exclusion zone," the UN commander, General Bernard Janvier, said in a statement at the weekend after talks with the Nato commander, Admiral Leighton Smith.

A Croatian minister indicated that an allied Bosnian-Croat offensive would seek the conquest of the whole of Serb-held western Bosnia. "It is absolutely in the interest of Croatia that the Banja Luka area becomes a part of the Bosnian Federation," Bosiljko Misetic said on state television.

The Croatian-Bosnian offensive has cut Serb-held Bosnia from 70 per cent of the country to just over half — scarcely more than the 49 per cent the rebels would keep under the US plan.

The Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, on Sunday conceded the losses for the first time. "We have sustained heavy losses and lost several towns and territories which have belonged to the indigenous Serbs for centuries," he told the Russian Itar-Tass news agency.

On Monday, the Bosnian government called for a "dramatic new political front" and dialogue with the Bosnian Serbs to avoid a bloodbath around the Serb stronghold of Banja Luka. Tens of thousands of Bosnian Serb refugees were streaming from the town. Reporters estimated that 50,000 people travelling on small tractors and horse carts stretched along 44 miles of road between Banja Luka and the town of Derventa, on the road east to Serbia.

After talks in Sarajevo with Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, Muhamed Sacirbey, the



Bosnian Serb soldiers give a traditional three-digit sign as they withdraw from Semizovac, west of Sarajevo PHOTO: SAVA RADOVANOVIC

Bosnian foreign minister, unveiled proposals for talks with Serb leaders in Banja Luka, northern Bosnia, to reverse "ethnic cleansing", end human rights abuses, and to work in harness with the United States quest for a quick peace settlement.

"We are not seeking the surrender of Banja Luka," Mr Sacirbey told a news conference. "We think it is time for a new political initiative to go along with the military initiative."

The surprise move underlined how the fate of the biggest Serb-held Bosnian city, and a key power centre of the Serbs' political and military leadership, has suddenly become the focus of the 41-month war.

"The point is to avoid an attack on Banja Luka," Mr Rifkind said, warmly endorsing the proposal and promising Britain's good offices in support. He described it as a prize worth aiming for.

The Bosnian offer looked like a clever way of admitting that Banja Luka was not on its hit list — for the moment. And in a further deft move aimed at splitting the Bosnian Serb leadership, Mr Sacirbey insisted no

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HK voters snub China

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

HONG KONG voters have delivered an unequivocal rebuke to China in the last legislative election under British rule — a poll denounced by Beijing on Monday as "unfair and unreasonable".

As final results revealed a sweeping victory for vociferous foes of Beijing, China rejected Sunday's poll as a British ploy to prolong its influence, and reiterated a vow to disband the legislative council as soon as it resumes sovereignty in 1997.

The warning did nothing to dampen the spirits of jubilant supporters of the Democratic Party, the main pro-democracy party headed by barrister Martin Lee.

In what remains a far from democratic colonial system, ultimate decision-making power will, in theory, remain with the London-appointed governor, Chris Patten. But the pro-democracy camp will be the single most important force in the territory's first fully elected legislature.

"The elections demonstrate that the people of Hong Kong deeply desire a genuinely democratic government," said Mr Lee, who is branded a seditious traitor by China, but who won his seat on Hong Kong island with 72 per cent of the vote.

In contests for 20 directly elected seats in the council, Mr Lee's party won 12 out of the 15 it contested, while China's favourite, the Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong, took only two.

China's unease is likely to be increased by praise for the election from Taiwan. Taipei has come under fierce verbal attack — and threats of military action — for its own moves towards democracy, which China says are pushing the island towards independence.

US bomber has his say in full

Andrea Shalal-Esa

IN AN attempt to stop a 17-year campaign of bombings, two leading US newspapers printed on Tuesday the 35,000-word anti-technology manifesto of a serial bomber who has become the most wanted man in America.

The attorney-general, Janet Reno, and the FBI director, Louis Freeh, recommended publication of the manuscript by the New York Times and the Washington Post out of concern for public safety.

Law enforcement officials hope publication will help to lead to the arrest of the elusive man they call the Unabomber.

The newspapers issued a joint statement announcing the distribution of unaltered copies of the manifesto in an eight-page insert in the Washington Post.

The document, which says the Industrial Revolution has been a disaster for the human race and calls for a return to "wild nature", was sent to the papers in June by a man who identified himself only as "FC".

The Unabomber, whose letter bombs have killed three people and injured 23 others, threatened to send a bomb "with intent to kill" unless the document was published in its entirety.

He last struck in April, when a letter bomb he sent killed a Californian timber industry lobbyist. The FBI believes he was a student of the history of science in the late 1970s in the Chicago area, then moved to Utah and northern California.

In an April letter to the New York Times, the bomber said he would renounce violence if his manuscript was published.

The papers split the cost, estimated at $40,000. Both papers, which printed 3,000-word excerpts from the manuscript in early August, stressed publication of the entire document would not set a precedent. — *Reuter*

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.40
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 9.50	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Spain	P 275
Germany	DM 3.60	Sweden	SK 17
Greece	DR 400	Switzerland	SF 3.30
Italy	L 3,000	Thailand	60 Baht

The France that passes Chirac's understanding

SINCE my student days, I have believed that France was two nations rather than one.

President Chirac's resumption of nuclear testing in the South Pacific has indicated clearly to which of the two French nations he is personally committed. He has said "*non*" to the France of "liberty, equality and fraternity", and "*oui*" to the France of "Let them eat cake."

He has said "*non*" to the France whose history, literature and culture has inspired intellectuals from the English-speaking world for centuries, and "*oui*" to the France that persecuted the Huguenots and imprisoned Dreyfus. He has said "*non*" to the France of the heroic resistance to Nazism, and "*oui*" to the France of the Vichy collaborators.

In protesting President Chirac's action, I wish to appeal over his head to the nobler France, that better France, that France which President Chirac seems incapable of understanding.
(The Rev) Robert J Faser,
Hobart, Tasmania,
Australia

ALLOW ME to express my disbelief at the French government's explosion of a nuclear device on Mururoa atoll. For us in the underdeveloped world of southern Africa, it is yet another demonstration of the blatant contempt France has for us. French interests and economics always seem to come first, and we experience again outrage at Gallic arrogance. In Africa we are still aghast at a nation that cannot yet appreciate the lessons of Rwanda, and have not forgotten the cynical trade in arms with the Ian Smith regime and apartheid South Africa. We can only see that, with this explosion, the French would want to put themselves beyond responsibility, for this is what nuclear capacity is all about. This is how we will remember the French contribution to the 50th anniversary of the end of the second world war.

It is a profound insult to all mankind to see that France has learned so little, and perhaps worth the French people pondering their fate if Nazi Germany had possessed this weapon. To Mr Chirac and the French people, all we can say is shame on you. I personally will never buy a single French commodity again.
A P Reeler,
Harare, Zimbabwe

YOUR correspondents make clear how environmental protest and the independence struggle will become inextricably intertwined over the French nuclear tests. In the Solomon Islands, resistance to Rio Tinto Zinc's polluting copper mine eventually ended the mining, but transmuted into a complex independence struggle resulting in a blockade of the island and a shoot-to-kill policy by Papuan militia. In Ogoni, Nigeria, resistance against the pollution from Shell's oil exploration closed the operation, but escalated into violence between government forces and local groups.

Chirac's guilt will not just relate to ecological damage. He is likely to be responsible for starting a spiral of violence that, eventually, the UN will be expected to sort out.
(Dr) Christopher Williams,
Environmental Victims Project,
Global Security Programme,
University of Cambridge

IT IS outrageous that the United Kingdom, virtually alone among the major nations of the world, has not protested to the French. Once again John Major has failed to show the decisive leadership this country is looking for. He is certain to be humiliated when he attends the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Auckland later this year.
Brian White,
Morden, Surrey

HAS CHIRAC considered the irony (and inherent message) in the fact that while he is exploding bombs on other people's territory, someone is doing the same on his?
Jane Abbott,
Fort Collins, Colorado, USA

Serbs against Karadzic

WE REPRESENT the Serbs of the territories controlled by the legal authorities of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

We are convinced that we express the interests of the majority of the Serb population, both within Bosnia-Herzegovina and refugees abroad. We are members of different political parties but many of us hold positions in the Bosnian government. We come from different parts of Bosnia, including Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zenica. We are convinced that at this critical moment it is essential to point out that Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic cannot be given the right to represent the Bosnian Serb point of view.

It is as much in the interests of Serbs as of anyone else to maintain a unified, sovereign Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina within its recognised international borders. We are fully committed to pluralist democracy and the equality of all its peoples and citizens. We are particularly opposed to any division of Bosnia, and above all one based on ethnic principles. We request that the Serb Civic Council be included as representative of the Bosnian Serb community in the peace negotiations.
(Prof) Mirko Pejanovic, (Prof) Tatjana Ljujic Mijatovic, Zarko Bulic, (Gen) Jovan Divjak, Mico Rakic and others,
Serb Civil Council of the Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina, London

Great country, evil regime

I WAS SHOCKED when I saw the word "land-owner" (China Stories, September 3). My grandfather was a land-owner before the communists took over the country. No one in today's China is a land-owner. All land belongs to the country.

Abductions of teenage girls and women do occur in China, and cannot be termed as not uncommon. They are not forced to marry a land-owner, but are sold to less-developed parts of the country, to marry the disabled, imbeciles or old bachelors. Abduction of women in China is an organised crime, and seems nothing to do with human rights violation.

I am sorry that anything bad is eagerly presented to the world, especially to those ignorant of China's brilliant history and culture. The country's greatness should not be eclipsed by the regime's evil.
(Name supplied),
Beijing, China

Sorry, it's not all right, Jack

I WAS thinking about Jack Straw the other day, in the way one does sometimes about an old friend one's known for 30 years or so. He's always seemed a decent enough chap, and I was wondering if he'll ever be reduced to sitting on a cold bench in a dirty street drinking Brasso or aftershave? Or perhaps that other favourite *al fresco* drink invented by those we like to call "down-and-outs" — Blue Lagoon (a heady mixture of cider and meths).

I wondered if the trials and tribulations of political life will ever lead him to a nervous breakdown; or his being told he's schizophrenic, then losing his job, home and family? I wonder if he's ever walked over Waterloo Bridge to the land behind Saint John's Church or sauntered down the Cut, and spoken to some of the beggars, drunks, and mentally ill "symbols of social decay" he so wants to rid us of?

That area was my father's last parish before he retired as vicar of St John's Waterloo. He could have introduced Jack to out-of-work carpenters in need of a bag of tools — professional men who'd lost their jobs and their way, decent men from Yorkshire and Scotland who'd come to London in desperate search of work and ended up sharing the gutter with the severely mentally ill. And all with one thing in common: their lives had become a tragedy, at the very bottom of the social heap with no way out.

And I wonder if he would then have seen that, if only he had put things differently last week, he could have made a name for himself as a great social reformer. A man who is not out to judge others far less fortunate, in fact with no fortune at all, but who is aware of their needs as victims themselves.

He could have simply said: "I believe society has a responsibility to its weaker members." And instead of saying they are the cause of "disorder in our streets", he could have said: "It is our aim to help all those who have no home, who are mentally ill without support and who have lost their dignity through misfortune and drink."

For in his very own words: "Unless you get the balance right, you will lose public confidence." In all the years I've known him I don't think he's spoken with greater wisdom.
Anna Ford,
Brentford, Middlesex

JACK STRAW'S assault on Britain's down-and-outs (Straw takes on "addicts and winos", September 10) demonstrates clearly that we cannot rely on the Labour party to right any of the wrongs inflicted on Britain since 1979. What does surprise, however, is the sheer enthusiasm with which Labour is embracing even the most vicious aspects of Toryism.

In these circumstances it is easy to sympathise with concerned youth's turn away from the parliamentary system and toward grassroots protest groups and non-violent direct action. It is my hope that these new social movements will establish a fresh basis for achieving social justice. And perhaps politicians and their Straw-like petty nastiness will be rendered increasingly irrelevant.
Charles Thorpe,
San Diego, California, USA

Briefly

BIBLICAL dates are often challenging to the literal-minded. The assertion of many scholars that Christ was born in 3 BC is one example. Now we read in the Guardian Weekly (September ...) that the Israelis are celebrating 3,000 years of Jerusalem as a Jewish capital, counted from King David's proclamation "in 996 BC".

Does this commemoration represent an accelerated political programme by the Israelis in celebrating the event eight years early? Or are the "strenuous Palestinian objections" due to the fact that they are better at arithmetic than the Israelis?
Ricardo A Olea,
Lawrence,
Kansas, USA

THANK YOU for giving Douglas Adams space to explain why Microsoft's Windows 95 is a mediocre and derivative product distinguished only by the aggression with which it is being marketed (Myths behind Microsoft's brave new world, September 3).

At a time when an obedient media are queueing up to kiss Bill Gates's bottom, this is a rare display of independence.
David Young,
London

HAVING just read "Child Slaves of Bindoon" (September ...), I trust that Cardinal Hume will at once denounce his church for permitting such atrocities.

Those of us who are not blinded by the aura of the Catholic religion know perfectly well that this kind of thing goes on all the time within the church, and that those responsible invariably get away with it by covering it up.

Such is still the power of the clerical collar, which when fully understood turns out to be the most despicable occupation on earth.
(Dr) Eric T Pengelley,
Davis, California, USA

WHAT do they do to apples? When we left to go on holiday in early August there was a solitary Golden Delicious sitting in the fruit bowl. We threw it out into the garden for the birds. But it was still there when we got back. And it still is.

The apples from our own tree have fallen to the ground alongside it and have been picked up, gone rotten, or been eaten by the wildlife. But that Golden Delicious is there, six weeks later, slightly soft on one side from the bruise where it hit the deck and in every other respect just as it was.

No rot, no mould, untouched by ant, wasp, slug or blackbird. What do they do to them?
Donald McLeod,
Staines, Middlesex

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Bosnian map redrawn

Continued from page 1
dialogue could be conducted with "war criminals" and that his government was only prepared for talks with "responsible" civilian leaders.

"This is an opportunity to set an example of mutual coexistence for the future," he said, seizing the moral high ground. "This could have dramatic implications, bringing about a leadership committed to the pace process."

Banja Luka was the centre of the Serb campaign of "ethnic cleansing" in 1992. Only about 35,000 non-Serbs are believed to remain in the wider Banja Luka area, home to 500,000 non-Serbs before the war. Since last month, the city has been flooded with tens of thousands of Serbs fleeing Croatia and now nearby areas of Bosnia.

Mr Rifkind stressed the importance of a nationwide ceasefire. But although Mr Sacirbey's proposal amounted to a conditional offer to halt the government offensive in the north, he denied he was offering a ceasefire lest it enabled the Serbs to retrench.

Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith, the UN commander in Bosnia, said in Sarajevo that the Bosnian government was now the main obstacle to a peace settlement, given that the Serbs were retreating in disarray and despite the fact that the Bosnian government has agreed to international peace plans spurned by the Bosnian Serbs.

In New York, the UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on Monday indicated the first step towards sending a Nato-led force to Bosnia. He said UN troops should be replaced by an international coalition, whether or not there is a peace deal.

In a letter to the Security Council, Mr Boutros-Ghali said if a peace agreement were concluded he would propose that the council authorise "an *ad hoc* coalition of member states", acting with appropriate regional organisations, to implement it.

Equally, he said, if the US peace initiative did not succeed and the council took more "enforcement action", he would recommend that the 31,000-strong UN force be replaced by a multinational force. He did not specify which force, but it was clear he had Nato in mind.

"In either case urgent action would be required to prepare for an expeditious handover by the UN Protection Force to the multinational force," he added.

Mr Boutros-Ghali said the UN had a limited capacity to manage large-scale operations, particularly those using force. He said there were also difficulties in "co-ordinating the operations of military personnel and civilian personnel with different mandates and different chains of command".

There was no immediate reaction from council members, some of whom said any decision was still premature while the US peace plan was being considered.

● Russia stepped up security around buildings used by US diplomats after a rocket-propelled grenade damaged the US embassy in the centre of Moscow last week. No one was hurt in the attack, which a Russian security official dismissed as the work of a "lone maniac". But it came as the recriminations over Nato's bombing of the Bosnian Serbs continued.

A South African 'praise poet' sings as Pope John Paul arrives to celebrate mass in Johannesburg PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MOORE

Kohl visit ends in Inkatha row

David Beresford in Johannesburg

CONTROVERSY is developing, in the wake of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's visit to South Africa, over German involvement in the activities of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party.

It has been confirmed that the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, linked with Dr Kohl's Christian Democratic Union, has been funding Inkatha for more than a decade. Under German law, donations to a political party are not allowed. Instead the money has been going to a research body, the Inkatha Institute.

The institute was closed after the Inkathagate scandal — when the Guardian exposed clandestine police funding — and has been replaced by the Institute for Federal Democracy. The new institute, headed by a former employee of the Adenauer Foundation, continues to receive foundation funds.

A representative in Johannesburg, Frank Von Spengler, confirmed last week that the foundation had helped to finance the Inkatha Institute since the early 1980s. It was receiving DM600,000 (£270,000) a year when it was closed, but he insisted the foundation had ensured the money was used only for research purposes.

Before he left South Africa, Chancellor Kohl was asked about CDU funding of Inkatha. He said: "As German Chancellor I have no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of this country."

Earlier, he urged President Nelson Mandela to consider a more federal constitution for South Africa.

It coincided with the disclosure of Inkatha's latest constitutional proposals for KwaZulu-Natal, which the African National Congress denounced as secessionist. The draft provides for a provincial army and restrictions on South African military operations in the region.

Apology for Dreyfus

Paul Webster in Paris

AFTER 100 years of lying, hedging and misinformation, the French army has officially admitted that the Jewish staff officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, was framed on a charge of spying for Germany.

General Jean-Louis Mourrut, head of the army's historical service, confirmed Dreyfus's innocence when he addressed the Jewish Consistory, the religion's central council, only a year after his predecessor was sacked for authorising an article that said doubt still existed.

Dreyfus was court martialled in 1894 and sentenced to life imprisonment on Devil's Island, off French Guiana. During the 10-year affair, which ripped France in two, the future prime minister, Georges Clemenceau, and the writer, Emile Zola, led a national campaign for his release, inspired by Zola's article headed "J'Accuse".

In 1896, the new army intelligence chief discovered that the real traitor was a Major Ferdinand Esterhazy. But the general staff ordered a cover-up, fearing the disclosures would dishonour the army.

Dreyfus was rehabilitated in 1906 and given the Legion of Honour. He died in 1935. During the row a year ago, the army refused to apologise, saying that Dreyfus's innocence was not generally accepted by historians. The Catholic Church, which led the 10-year anti-Dreyfus campaign, apologised publicly in October last year.

Condemnation by President Jacques Chirac of the Vichy regime's anti-Semitic collaboration with the Nazis during the second world war may have prompted the army to make amends.

Wearing full-dress uniform to emphasise that he spoke in the name of France's military establishment, General Mourrut said: "The affair was a military conspiracy which ended in the deportation of an innocent man and was partly founded on a false document."

A million men to march

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

UP TO a million black men could march on Washington next month in what the organisers claim will be the most visible display of black muscle since the glory days of Martin Luther King.

The Million Man March, on October 16, is already being hyped as the biggest political demonstration since Dr King led civil rights protesters to the American capital in 1963.

Activists have reserved the entire National Mall area, scene of some of the mass anti-war protests of the Vietnam era.

"It's a response to the deteriorating conditions in the United States toward black people in general, and black men in particular," said the march's co-ordinator, Benjamin Chavis, who was ousted last year as director of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, the country's oldest civil rights movement.

Organisers say the march is for men only because it is black men who suffer most. With more young black men going to jail than to college — and with black teenage boys six times more likely to be murdered than their white counterparts — it has become a matter of consensus that the black American male is in crisis.

Behind the event is black America's most controversial leader, Louis Farrakhan, minister of the black separatist Nation of Islam. Widely condemned as a racist and anti-Semite, he was once ostracised by the black establishment, but is now one of the few leaders able to inspire younger African-Americans.

If the march is a success, it will mark a significant power shift within the black community — away from the integrationist politics of Dr King and the Rev Jesse Jackson and towards the more aggressive, separatist stance of Mr Farrakhan.

Ethnic madness comes full circle

Ian Traynor in Donji Vakuf

SOAKED to the skin, drunk as lords, permanent smiles creasing their grimy features, the Muslim foot-soldiers of Bosnia's war walked back into the small hillside town of Donji Vakuf last week almost three years after the Serb military juggernaut drove them into angry exile.

The autumn rains came down in sheets. The frontline villages — charred, wrecked and abandoned — leaked like sieves. The men of the Bosnian army's seventh corps celebrated the recovery of Donji Vakuf with plum brandy, machine gun fire and the pathetic plunder of what the Serbs had left behind.

A Muslim soldier said: "We've won, finally. We've got Donji Vakuf. The Croats have got Sipovo and Jajce and Drvar. Four towns have fallen. The Serbs have all buggered off. They just fled."

But Bosnian army radio traffic indicated that many Serb dead and wounded were still in Donji Vakuf. Thick plumes of smoke to the north confirmed that intermittent fighting was continuing.

In Kopcic, a razed village just south of Donji Vakuf that marked the frontline until a few days ago, hordes of children played in the downpour and climbed inside the shells of houses in what had been a no-go area.

Now the Serbs are on the run; not only from places they conquered in the ethnic cleansing blitz of 1992 but from the heartlands they have inhabited for centuries.

Donji Vakuf, a pre-war town of some 24,000 people that sits astride the Vrbas river in the hills of central Bosnia, seems a modest prize. But when it finally fell, it marked the first time in 41 months of war that the Bosnians had recovered a town of this size from the Serbs.

Donji Vakuf represents a huge morale-booster for the largely refugee army that fought for it, based in nearby Travnik. But the significance of the Serb losses goes further: not because of growing Muslim army prowess, but because of the rout of the Serbs by the newly confident Croatian forces.

A quartet of central and west Bosnian towns have effectively fallen to the Croats and Muslims — Drvar, Sipovo, Jajce and Donji Vakuf. The first two have gone to the Croats, despite the fact that they have never lived there. Drvar to the west was 97 per cent Serb before the war. Four out of five people in Sipovo were Serb.

The figures show the full lunacy of the Bosnian Serb campaign to carve out ethnically pure statelets. It is coming full circle, with Serbs forced to abandon communities almost their own for centuries.

They are doing it without much of a fight, fuelling speculation that the political masters in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo have decided the war has gone on long enough, that it is time to tidy up the demographic map and conclude a tactical peace.

If such speculation turns out to be true, it confirms that politicians who proclaim abstract nationalist aims display a brutal disregard for the ethnic communities in whose name they profess to act.

Until 1992 the towns of eastern Bosnia were majority Muslim. There are virtually no Muslims left there now.

Until last month, the large tract of south-western Croatia known as Krajina was majority Serb. There are virtually no Serbs left now.

The area of western Bosnia now under Croat assault — from Glamoc in the south to Petrovac further north — was almost totally Serb until this week. Soon there will be no Serbs left.

The Croats are on a roll. But the large swath of Croatia and neighbouring Bosnia they have seized in the past few weeks is not so much an answer to their nationalist dreams as a new problem: they do not have the people to populate their newly acquired territories.

For the moment, the Serbs are cutting and running without much resistance. If Croat and Muslim bravado is to be believed, they will remain in hot pursuit. They say their aim now is to secure Jajce in central Bosnia.

And now that the tide is turning, the Muslims of Bosnia, after more than three years of being shelled and tormented by the Serbs, are hardly in magnanimous mood.

"This is Bosnia, not Serbia," said Nedzad as he savoured the reconquest of Donji Vakuf in a cafe in the nearby town of Bugojno. "It'll never be Serbia." When asked if he was of Muslim nationality, he waspishly replied. "No, I'm not a Muslim. I'm a Bosnian."

The Week

THE United Nations Women's Conference approved a hotly disputed blueprint for promoting sexual equality into the 21st century; it enshrines women's rights but avoids commitments to pay for action.

Washington Post, page 19

MADAGASCAR'S president, Albert Zafy, swept to victory in a referendum called to decide who appoints the prime minister.

THE first international conference on a single ecological catastrophe — the drying up of the Aral Sea — opened this week in Uzbekistan.

Comment, page 12

THE United States protested strongly after two American balloonists taking part in an international race were shot down and killed by a Bielarussian air defence unit.

THE SWISS Bankers Association said that it had found assets worth millions of dollars which could be from the secret accounts of Jews killed during the Holocaust. But it dismissed as speculation claims that interest since the second world war had increased the value of the assets to $7 billion.

Washington Post, page 20

THE OZONE hole over the southern hemisphere has unexpectedly doubled in the last year and is now the size of Europe, the United Nations weather agency warned.

AT LEAST 100 people are reported to have been killed in a raid in Rwanda, near the border with Zaire, which may hamper UN efforts to repatriate Rwandan refugees.

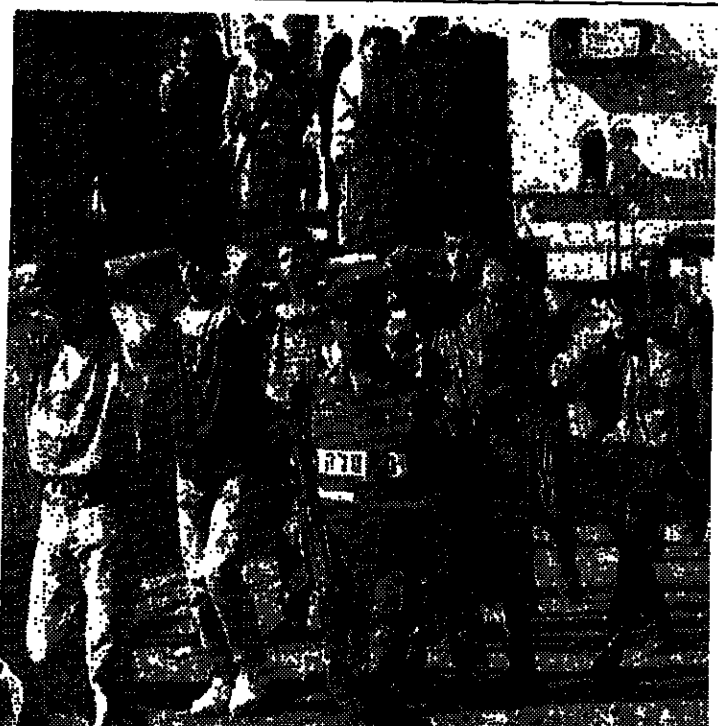
THE FBI arrested 12 people and raided more than 120 homes and offices in New York, Newark, Dallas and Miami in a crackdown on child pornography in cyberspace.

HURRICANE Marilyn, which swept through the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, killed three people and injured more than 100 in St Thomas.

TWENTY prison inmates in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, who have Aids are to be released so they can go home to die.

NEARLY 75 Sri Lankan soldiers, police and airmen were killed when a plane crashed off the coast of Colombo. Bad weather was given as the likely cause of the accident.

INDOCHINA'S tigers face extinction at the hands of poachers within 10 years, the Worldwide Fund for Nature warned. Chinese medicine was blamed for the threat.



Armed guard: border police round up Palestinians in Jerusalem last week after the stabbing of an Israeli man PHOTOGRAPH: JEROME DELAY

Libya steps up expulsions

Kathy Evans

TENS of thousands of Egyptians and Sudanese have joined the growing exodus of Palestinian workers from Libya following Colonel Muammar Gadafy's decision to expel all foreign Arab workers.

There are about 500,000 Egyptians in Libya, and 1.5 million Sudanese, many of whom have lived there for decades.

Libyan exile sources in London said that foreign Arab workers were being picked up in the street by the revolutionary militia and assembled for deportation.

The Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat met President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt on Sunday and asked him to persuade Col Gadafy to stop the expulsions.

Arab officials hope that the expulsions are just another of the colonel's irrational decisions and will be rescinded in a few weeks.

Lebanon is finding the Libyan expulsions a good opportunity to rid itself of Lebanese Palestinians living overseas by banning them from returning.

Col Gadafy has claimed that the expulsions will rid his country of illegal workers and provide more employment for Libyans. Three years of sanctions over the Lockerbie case have brought the Libyan economy virtually to its knees.

Questions are being asked about how Libya's oil money is being spent by Col Gadafy and his 24-year-old son, Saif ul Islam, who plays a leading role in managing the economy.

Most Libyans see the expulsions as a symptom of Col Gadafy's frustration with his Arab allies and their failure to get the sanctions lifted.

● Israel's foreign minister, Shimon Peres, and the PLO chairman, Yasser Arafat, were straining on Tuesday to meet their latest deadline for agreement on extending Palestinian self-rule in the occupied West Bank.

Negotiations have narrowed to virtually a single issue: security arrangements in the flashpoint city of Hebron.

Fury as greens admit fiasco

Paul Brown in Papeete, Tahiti

SENIOR Greenpeace activists heralded as heroes in public when they returned from Mururoa after the organisation's two ships were seized by French commandos, are to be called to account for what Greenpeace regards as a campaigning disaster.

They face what a senior Greenpeace executive called the equivalent of a "court martial for disobeying orders and putting the whole mission in jeopardy". The organisation's chain of command is to be re-examined.

The continuing Mururoa campaign against French nuclear testing is limping along after the MV Greenpeace — the enterprise's "mother ship" carrying months of supplies — was impounded by the French.

Although a campaign decision had been made to sacrifice the organisation's flagship, the Rainbow Warrior, it was considered crucial to keep the MV Greenpeace operational.

Apart from its role to succour the peace fleet, the mother ship was vital to a number of planned clandestine operations against the French. These missions, and the people who were involved in them, were put at much greater risk by the loss of the ship.

The MV Greenpeace was seized because specific instructions not to use the helicopter aboard were disregarded and it flew repeatedly into the 12-mile exclusion zone around Mururoa. Inflatable dinghies were also used to launch attacks on the 12-mile limit, against express instructions and agreements.

The Mururoa campaign is the largest in Greenpeace's history. Personnel were drawn from 16 offices worldwide and a campaign headquarters established in Tahiti. Every Greenpeace branch in the world conducted its own national campaign.

Months of planning and millions of pounds of investment in supplies and campaigning were lost in a single day when the MV Greenpeace was seized. The peace flotilla, composed mainly of small yachts which had sailed thousands of miles, had been promised aid when it arrived.

Thomas Schultz, the nuclear and disarmament campaigns co-ordinator for Greenpeace International, said: "The individuals who are responsible will be called to account. This formal process will begin the minute this is over.

"It is a big job debriefing everyone to see what went wrong at what stage. At the end of October, we will get all the key players in one room and thrash this thing out."

At that meeting will be Ulrich Jurgens, the campaigns director and Mr Schultz's boss. Mr Jurgens is known to regard an overhaul of the command structure as vital.

Among those in the firing line are Stephanie Mills, campaigner on board the Rainbow Warrior; Jon Castle, the ship's captain; Xavier Pastor, campaigner on the MV Greenpeace; and Peter Schwarz, its captain. Another key player is Paula Hucklebury, the helicopter pilot who flew into the exclusion zone.

When most Greenpeace crew were flown back to Papeete by the French, they were "mutinous" when told they could take no further part in the campaign.

There had been tensions in the organisation before the September operation. In July, when the Rainbow Warrior was rammed by a French warship on its first foray into the exclusion zone, it was towed out of territorial waters and released. But instead of staying on station as had apparently been agreed, it retired to the Cook Islands for "repairs", becoming the centre of a media circus.

An internal Greenpeace row was papered over as the date for the tests approached. Mr Schultz saw a struggle between the "media types and the action types". The tradition of lengthy campaigns at sea conflicts with the media's need for a dramatic "quick hit".

● The South Pacific Forum will this week reject an offer from Paris to send a team of scientists to monitor the environmental impact of France's nuclear tests on Mururoa atoll.

Papua New Guinea's national planning minister, Moi Avei, said that the French invitation was intended to make Pacific leaders feel comfortable with testing. He said he would recommend that all 16 forum member countries, which include Australia and New Zealand, reject the offer.

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Clinton sets out to woo East Asia

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

THE Clinton administration launched a bid for dominance in East Asia on Sunday, as it moved to outmanoeuvre China and France on nuclear testing and to step up its ties with its old enemy, Vietnam.

Officials signalled that the United States would soon sign the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone treaty, banning it from stationing nuclear weapons in the region and using or threatening to use them.

Winston Lord, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said the decision was being urgently reviewed in Washington.

Speaking at a conference of the South Pacific Forum in Papua New Guinea, Mr Lord said: "Because of the recent events, including negotiations for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the US government is moving quickly to come to a final decision with respect to the SPNFZ."

Mr Lord has frequently been used to test the water for US policy changes in sensitive areas.

The move represents a shrewd attempt by the US to take advantage of hostility to China and France in the South Pacific, after Beijing's underground detonation of a device in August and the French test at Mururoa atoll earlier this month. Mr Lord was at pains to tell the Port Moresby gathering that Washington "regretted" both actions and had lobbied against them.

For years the South Pacific nations have urged the US to observe the SPNFZ treaty, signed in 1985, to which Russia and China are partial signatories. If Washington signs up, only France and Britain would be left out.

The benefit for Washington would be an enormous public relations boost in a region the US regards as increasingly important. President Clinton has frequently emphasised the significance of the Pacific Rim to US trade.

With anti-French hostility running high in the South Pacific, the Clinton administration has spotted a chance to play the good guys at little cost. Mr Clinton already pledged to end all US nuclear testing, in defiance of the advice of the Pentagon.

Mr Clinton will travel to Moscow next April for an unprecedented "nuclear safety summit", according to Newsweek magazine. He will seek the backing of President Boris Yeltsin and leaders of the G7 group of industrialised nations for an international pact on handling "loose nukes" — weapons-grade fissionable material from nuclear reactors.

The president is expected to sign a presidential decision directive, ordering £65 million in aid to help Moscow safeguard its uranium and plutonium, and all its nuclear-storage sites, by the end of 1996.

The US has also moved to strengthen economic links with Vietnam. The administration appears determined to move fast on its July renewal of diplomatic ties which marked the end of 20 years of official hostility. The two nations are due to meet on October 5 for a conference on "economic normalisation", where they will discuss granting Hanoi most favoured nation status.

Presidential aides are keen to act quickly, knowing that accusations of softness toward Vietnam could be damaging in next year's election campaign.

Mr Clinton will therefore get several politically charged events out of the way soon, including the October 5 visit to Washington by Vietnam's foreign minister, Nguyen Manh Cam, who will be the most senior figure to visit the US since the Vietnam War.

Later in the year, a former US defence secretary, Robert McNamara, is due to visit Hanoi.

India fights fast-food culture

Suzanne Goldenberg in New Delhi

COLONEL SANDERS beware: although Kentucky Fried Chicken has won a temporary reprieve from the wrath of Indian economic nationalists, the fast-food chain is emerging as a key hate symbol in grass-roots opposition to economic liberalisation.

Local authorities in the southern city of Bangalore shut down India's first KFC outlet earlier this month after discovering excessive monosodium glutamate in the chicken. The high court granted a stay against the revocation of its licence, but opponents of KFC are vowing to fight on. "It's just junk food. Why should we bring junk into India," said Menaka Gandhi, daughter-in-law of India's leading political family and an animal rights activist who is emerging as the scourge of Western fast food.

KFC is the latest entrant to a hate list of multinationals that includes Pepsi, the Texas power company, Enron Development Corp, and Dupont. But while consumer goods are highly visible, they accounted for only 5 per cent of foreign investment in India last year.

A much more significant victory for the economic nationalists was the decision by the state government of Maharashtra this summer to cancel the £1.75 billion Enron power plant, the largest single foreign investment project.

Ms Gandhi is voicing the anxieties of many Indians that their traditional morality and way of life is fast disappearing. In this she is embracing a modern Indian tradition. *Swadeshi*, or self-reliance, was the ruling credo of the struggle against British rule. Few images exercise so much power as Mahatma Gandhi exhorting his followers to abandon mill cloth for rough, home-spun cotton, and swadeshi remained a tenet of Congress governments until 1991.

But the new swadeshi movement is remarkable for bringing together environmentalists, the left, technocrats and, principally, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), which is affiliated to the rightwing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and even more extreme Hindu organisations.

It is not an association that perturbs George Fernandes, the socialist leader who as industry minister threw Coca-Cola out of India in 1977. Since March last year, activists from his Samata Party have courted arrest in daily demonstrations outside parliament against Pepsi's operations in India. The SJM also began campaigning against Pepsi last month.

"Our commitment to swadeshi is total, but our reach and our spread is not adequate," Mr Fernandes said. "If the BJP and SJM are at the forefront, I don't think the blame lies on them for hijacking the movement. The space was there and nobody was occupying it."

Like Mr Fernandes and Ms Gandhi, SJM activists insist they are not opposed to multinationals, provided they invest in core development projects. "We are not against modernisation," said Jagdish Shetigar, an SJM leader. "Wherever technology is required, we will definitely welcome it. But in consumer goods we have reservations."

Although the swadeshi activists are grabbing the headlines with their campaigns, the movement's long term future is uncertain. Although the BJP has said it will put swadeshi on its platform for elections, widely expected next spring, other issues may intrude by then. "In 1996, it will be one of the items, but definitely it will not be the major item," Mr Shetigar said.

Asians face Aids calamity

Nicholas Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

MEDICAL experts, academics and social workers from 60 countries, meeting in the Thai city of Chiang Mai, are debating measures to save Asia's booming economies from the threat of an Aids epidemic.

The Third International Conference on Aids in Asia coincides with predictions that the region will surpass Africa as the area most stricken by the disease by the end of the century. It already leads the world in new HIV infections, and by 2000 is expected to suffer more than the rest of the world put together. This would undermine Asia's economic growth, analysts fear.

"Since . . . the end of 1992, the crisis that is the spread of HIV in Asia and the Pacific has tragically deepened," said John Dwyer, president of the Aids Society for Asia and the Pacific. "Inexorably it appears as though the epicentre of the epidemic is moving from sub-Saharan Africa to Asia." He urged regional governments to collaborate in fighting the disease.

Thai experts believe Thailand already accounts for 800,000 to a million of Asia's estimated 3 million HIV carriers. Although the rate of infection has stabilised, it is fuelling the spread of tuberculosis, increasing the strain on medical facilities.

India, however, is likely to become Asia's HIV capital, with 4 million cases by the turn of the century, according to United Nations Development Programme figures. Concern is mounting for smaller countries, such as Cambodia, which the World Health Organisation says is suffering the world's fastest rate of infection.

Experts say the number of people in Asia with full-blown Aids has quadrupled to 2 million in the past two years, and will rise to 10 million by the end of the century. Most are young. One Thai academic says that Thailand stands to lose up to £6 billion in health care costs and lost production by the end of the century. And Mechai Viravaidya, a Thai birth control and anti-Aids campaigner, says the country will lose up to £1.3 billion a year in tourism revenue.

Thailand has reached an agreement with China, which will help to distribute and administer a herbal treatment said to slow the onset of Aids. The two countries will also cooperate in seeking a cure.

Bill's head turned by foreign affairs



The US this week

Martin Walker

THE tantalising prospect of a Bosnian peace agreement, one of a series of possible international successes, is raising hopes in the White House that next year's re-election campaign could star Bill Clinton, the foreign policy president.

Yes. You read that correctly. The man who won the White House in 1992 by saying that George Bush was all very well as chief executive of the planet but the job was to run the USA, has now plunged into foreign affairs.

The serious breach with Russia which loomed as US cruise missiles slammed into Bosnian Serb positions on Sunday has now become a new joint Washington-Moscow agreement to lift the siege of Sarajevo with the help of Russian peace-keeping troops, followed by the international conference on Bosnia that Russia has long sought.

Mr Clinton is now juggling a series of diplomatic balls which could yet fall into a tumble of disasters. But for the moment his chances look promising. He has evidently seized back the political initiative just as the Republican-dominated Congress was poised to take command of the foreign policy agenda with its threat to override his presidential veto and order a lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia.

Palestinian and Israeli leaders are expected in Washington soon to sign the next phase of the US-brokered Middle East peace settlement. Although a Syrian-Israeli agreement on the Golan Heights remains elusive, the agreements with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and with Jordan have already brought the most hopeful developments in the region since the Camp David agreement between Israel and Egypt 17 years ago. And the defence secretary, William Perry, noted last week that the US was prepared to commit troops to a peace-monitoring operation on the Golan Heights, if that proceeded as hoped.

US officials are also increasingly confident that a US-Chinese summit could be arranged by the first week in November, a highly public symbol of the restored relationship which earlier this year saw a furious China withdraw its ambassador to Washington.

In November, President Clinton is still planning to visit Britain and Ireland, in the hope of claiming yet more political credit for the US role in promoting the IRA ceasefire and the still hoped-for all-party talks on a peace settlement.

With a new round of elections in Haiti about to recall the successful risk President Clinton took last year in toppling the military regime of General Raoul Cedras and restoring the democratically elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Clinton administration has some clear diplomatic achievements to boast of.

"It's Clinton as the comeback kid in foreign policy, ironically in the foreign policy area where he was once so uncomfortable," commented Professor James Chace, editor of World Policy Journal. "Given the defeat of his domestic programmes like health care, Clinton may well be running next year, almost despite himself, on his foreign policy achievements."

The first two years of the Clinton administration were marked by the disastrous loss of 28 US troops in Somalia, the turning back of a US naval ship when faced by an angry mob in Port-au-Prince harbour, and indecision in Bosnia.

Those setbacks overwhelmed the successes that did take place, from the Ukraine agreement to give up nuclear weapons to securing the final departure of Russian troops from the Baltic states and the Israeli-PLO handshake on the White House lawn.

They even served to eclipse the boldest ventures of the Clinton presidency: his readiness to split his own party and work with the Republicans to enact the North American Free Trade Agreement; and to seal the Uruguay round of the Gatt world trade pact. If this and the further commitment to develop a free trading arrangement through the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference succeed in building a free trading global economy with the US at its heart, then Mr Clinton will be entitled to claim that he is the real architect of the post-cold war era.

And for once, the entire Clinton foreign policy team seems to be performing extraordinarily well. We have seen Hillary Clinton impress even the Republicans with her forthright talk of human rights at the United Nations women's conference

It is eerie that so many international issues suddenly seem to be going right for Clinton

in Beijing, even as the secretary of state, Warren Christopher, was wooing his Chinese counterpart back into comity.

The deputy secretary of state, Strobe Talbott, flew to Moscow last week, shortly after the Russian denunciations of Nato's bombing of the Bosnian Serbs as "genocide", and appears to have lured the Russians back into being "part of the solution rather than part of the problem". At the same time, the assistant secretary of state, Richard Holbrooke, has evidently pulled off an extraordinary coup in his shuttle diplomacy around the Balkans.

Last week also saw the national security adviser, Tony Lake, and vice-President Al Gore explaining to the Sinn Fein leader, Gerry Adams, as they had earlier to Britain's Northern Ireland minister, Michael Ancram, the need for "flexibility" if all sides were to move simultaneously on all-party talks and on an international commission to sort out the thorny problems of decommissioning weapons.

And while all these manoeuvres were under way in various parts of the world, the Japanese yen fell back to the symbolic threshold of 100 to the dollar, after flirting with a rate of 80 to the dollar earlier in the year. The treasury secretary, Robert Rubin, has — with the support of other central banks — mounted a series of skilful ambushes of the currency market speculators over the summer.

It is almost eerie that so many international issues suddenly seem to be going right for the Clinton administration. Perhaps luck is simply turning their way, after the hideous first year in Somalia and Haiti. Perhaps they have simply taken astute advantage of the changed situation in Bosnia, in the wake of the outrageous Serb attacks on Srebrenica and Zepa, and the successful Croat offensive in Kraijina, and the coming of a Gaullist French president in Jacques Chirac.

But the reaction of many thoughtful people in Washington is that the Clinton team have had their minds wonderfully concentrated by the coming re-election campaign.

"It all goes to show that Bill Clinton is so utterly and seriously intent on re-election that he's beginning to act like George Bush," commented Charles William Maynes, editor of Foreign Policy, and a former assistant secretary of state in the Carter administration. "After nearly three years of a Bosnian attitude of high moralism with no reality behind it, for the first time they now have a policy which blends force with diplomacy, which has rallied the allies, and which has a sporting chance of success."

Presidents faced with a hostile Congress have traditionally turned to foreign policy, where they are rather more free to act. And the Republicans have become so intent on their own internal difficulties that Mr Clinton has been given room for international manoeuvre.

The party is in a mess. Republicans from both House and Senate gathered together in a rare joint caucus last week, hoping to repair the suddenly open divisions within their ranks after 20 moderate Republicans in the Senate joined the Democrats to defeat the party's plan to reform the welfare system.

The hardline welfare proposal, which would have barred welfare payment to unmarried mothers and to women who became pregnant again while on welfare, was voted down by a large margin of 66-34 in the Senate as the Democrats cheered their rare victory.

The most striking defeat for the Republicans since they took command of both Houses of Congress in January, the fall of the welfare bill was also a setback for the Republican presidential front-runner, Robert Dole, who saw his party majority crumble away. Mr Dole had originally opposed the hardline bill, then backed it to win conservative support, and was stunned to see a

General Powell could yet challenge Clinton as a Democrat or run as an independent

strange alliance of liberal and anti-abortion Republicans join the democrats to defeat it.

Liberal Republicans believe the bill is unfair; others responded to an unusual flurry of lobbying by Catholic bishops who argued that the ban on welfare payments for women who get pregnant would simply encourage more abortions.

"Do we really know if we say 'No cash benefits' that mothers are going to stop having children?" asked Republican Senator Pete Domenici. "If you believe that, you believe in the tooth fairy."

Senator Dole and Speaker Newt Gingrich gathered their fractious members to try to hammer out a joint compromise on Medicare, where once again the liberal Republicans in the Senate threaten to desert the party line.

They do so despite a carefully planned internal campaign by Speaker Gingrich to school his party into seeing matters his way. Through his Gopac organisation, Mr Gingrich is distributing educational tape cassettes that illustrate how Republicans must explain that Medicare is not being cut, but "saved from bankruptcy".

This is a difficult sell when a series of rather striking Democratic television ads are fielding stars from top-rated television shows like Golden Girls, saying how worried they are about the Republican plans.

The Republicans signalled their unwillingness for a battle last week when they assured President Clinton that they would pass a series of temporary funding measures to avert a shut-down of federal government during the confrontations over the budget. The point is that the Republicans are bogged down in the difficult job of domes[...] form, while Mr Clinton is [...] looking presidential on a [...] scale.

The Republicans are also [...] back nervously at the politi[...] tential of General Colin Powel[...] has at last unveiled his views [...] main political issues. He de[...] support for the principles of [...] tion rights, affirmative actio[...] gun control that would make [...] far the most liberal of the cur[...] crop of Republican presid[...] candidates.

Religious conservatives sa[...] stantly that this could rule out [...] support for the one figure th[...] opinion polls broadly agree c[...] beat President Clinton next [...] Gen Powell's opposition to pra[...] schools and his support for [...] tion rights "disappoint a [...] number of people who wou[...] quite unlikely, in spite of his [...] ism, to be willing to support h[...] the presidency", said Ralph [...] executive director of the Chri[...] Coalition.

These are hard times for ce[...] Republicans. Governor Pete W[...] of California, who also sup[...] abortion rights, has begun to [...] out of the presidential stakes. [...] nounced that he would no lo[...] stand in the Iowa caucuses in [...] ary, although he will still cam[...] in the first primary state of [...] Hampshire.

Except for his tax-cutting fis[...] conservatism, Gen Powell's vie[...] social policy are remarkably c[...] to those of President Clinton, a[...] pointedly left open the possibili[...] he could yet choose to challenge [...] as a Democrat, or run as an inde[...] dent. But "the easier way to [...] would be as a Republican.

Gen Powell, whose wife [...] against his candidacy because [...] fears that he would become a[...] sassination target, is evide[...] seeking a coronation by ac[...] ation, rather than envisaging [...] altrition of the Republican [...] maries. He has staked out his p[...] ical terrain and invited [...] Republicans to take him or le[...] him, while leaving President C[...] ton fretting about the faint prosp[...] of a Democratic challenge.

Gen Powell's political stateme[...] made during an interview [...] ABC-TV, were diplomatic[...] phrased, except for his firm supp[...] of the death penalty. He would pr[...] fer pregnant women to have the[...] child, and then put it out for ad[...] tion. "If, however, it is her choice [...] abort, it's a matter between her, he[...] doctors, her family, and her co[...] science and her God.

"On social issues, I'm a product [...] my background. I think the gove[...] ment does have a role to play [...] making sure that those of our ci[...] zens who are most in need, who [...] hurting, are taken care of."

Whether or not he stands as a[...] independent or as a partisan, Ge[...] Powell is clearly the charter me[...] ber of the cautious party. As Pres[...] dent Clinton steps boldly into t[...] foreign policy arena, and the Rep[...] licans take the awesome ris[...] grappling with the great intracta[...] of welfare and Medicare, th[...] chances of disaster are alarmin[...] high. Should domestic or intern[...] tional affairs go hideously wro[...] the safe pair of hands that is Co[...] Powell could be the beneficiary.

That would be unfortunate. Th[...] US needs to tackle its health [...] welfare mess; the world suffe[...] when its only superpower dith[...] and turns introspective. An activ[...] foreign policy president and a r[...] formist Congress may, odd[...] enough, be the better prospect.

Diamonds threaten Angola's peace plan

Philip van Niekerk in Saurimo reports on a secret deal to share the spoils of Africa's wild west

AFTER sundown the town of Saurimo in northern Angola is alive with gunfire — the rattle of AK47s and pistol shots. A nonchalant United Nations peace-keeper sips his beer and waves his hand dismissively. "What you hear now is people getting drunk," he says. "Everyone here has a gun."

The last battle of the 19-year Angolan civil war is being waged amid the crazy diamond rush in the provinces of North and South Lunda in Africa's wild west.

As the rest of the country moves slowly into line with last autumn's Lusaka Protocol between the Unita rebels and the government MPLA, the Lundas are the last contested areas.

The region is crawling with bandits, diamond dealers and mercenaries — and Unita and army troops. Only 20 yards separate their front lines across the Chicapa River. One UN peacekeeper said that in July alone the army lost 153 troops.

A two-hour plane ride away, in the Angolan capital of Luanda, a deal is being brokered by the UN to bring peace to the Lundas. No one will talk about it publicly because they are embarrassed — the rebels and the government are carving up the diamond fields of the Lundas. The mercenaries will get their share; the poor will not.

The talks are well-advanced, but the Lundas are still volatile. Here it is not peace protocols that rule, but diamonds — although, except for the posh pink headquarters of the state diamond company in Saurimo, it would be difficult to tell that this was the entry point to one of the richest gem-fields.

Twelve miles north, in the Luachimo river diggings, a boy no older than 11 scratches at the ground, shovelling dirt on to a mound. This is put into a bag by a man and given to another man to carry 100 yards down to the river. There, a fourth person is sifting sand with a makeshift sieve, searching for the tell-tale sparkle.

"Here we have found 12 stones," says Manuel Pedro, aged 39, sweat glistening on his shoulders. But the proceeds have to be shared with the boss, who automatically takes the largest cut. The boss emerges from the pit, his camouflage uniform frayed and caked in dust. He is Jose Ngangula, an officer in the Angolan army.

The Unita diggings are only 12 miles upstream; diamonds have paid for the rebels' war. "If a mango falls from a tree you don't just leave it to rot," said a Unita official at the joint monitoring commission.

That is the sticking point. In the Lundas, the UN has been unable to secure peace because it cannot prise the warring sides from their diamonds.

General Chris Garuba, head of the UN peacekeeping force, says: "We hit a wall in the Lundas. The parties themselves created a gentlemen's agreement to remain where they are. When the time comes, Unita are supposed to go straight to the quartering areas [where they are to be demobilised]. But I think we're going to have problems."

Unita sees no reason why it should vacate its diggings. "Why must Unita withdraw if higher ranks from the Angolan government are digging on the other side?" says a UN mediator. "Unita also needs money to pay its bills."

Unita soldiers want guarantees before they abandon the diamond mines and go into the quartering areas — the crucial step to end hostilities. The formula the two parties are searching for in Luanda is one in which Unita can exploit the diamonds legally. The mechanism by which Unita can hold on to its mines has already been worked out.

Fernando Faustino Muteke, the chief government negotiator in Luanda, says the only condition is that Unita will have to create enterprises or front companies and register with the government. "Concessions will be given to companies Unita sets up," he says.

Those who have not . . . Diamond miners at Kapemba in northern Angola work all day to dig for the gems that threaten to stall a return to law and order in the Lundas PHOTOGRAPH: HARRIET LOGAN

But it is apparent that the carve-up is more extensive. Katangese mercenaries, from the southern province of Zaire, and South Africans from Executive Outcomes, who helped the Angolan government inflict heavy defeats on the rebels last year, are also to be rewarded with concessions.

BUT before Unita and the MPLA can implement any under-the-table deal, they need to restore law and order.

At the market in Saurimo, snappily dressed Malians and Senegalese hold out uncut diamonds in grubby newspapers. They carry their own miniature scales which they whip out to "test" carat levels.

The diamond dealers are a source of great anxiety for De Beers, the South African company that controls the world diamond market through its Central Selling Organisation.

Diamonds have been flooding out of Angola since last autumn's cease-fire signalled the start of the diamond rush. Even though De Beers pays dollars, no questions asked, to any Angolan who shows up with a diamond, most of the stones continue to evade the net. "The majority are still getting out illegally," says Ken Kempson, Angolan director of De Beers. "This is a source of enormous concern. It is clearly affecting the market."

President Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola agrees, saying earlier this month that restoring control to the diamond diggings remained his priority. He says that state revenues from diamonds amounted to approximately $5 million a month, but that $350 million to $400 million was leaving the country illegally.

The government has announced a clean-up operation in the north. However, talk of 20,000 troops moving into the Lundas has prompted a new crisis because Unita fears they could turn into a military operation against it.

"If the army went in to clean up the area, even to chase the bandits into the bush, it wouldn't be long before they find themselves in confrontation with Unita's diggings," says Isias Samakuva, Unita's chief negotiator in Luanda. "If the government attacks Unita, the Lusaka Protocol may collapse."

The object of the operation is to chase all illegal foreigners out of the Lundas. "We want to create an environment in which Angolan citizens, state companies and foreign companies will be able to work in peace," says Mr Muteke, the government negotiator.

There is still deep distrust between the parties. But the one thing Unita and the MPLA agree on is that whoever gets the diamonds it should not be gangsters from Zaire, Senegal and South Africa.

Ordinary Angolans, however, have been excluded from a share of the spoils. The war has reduced millions to homelessness and beggarhood. A general strike is planned in Luanda this week against unemployment and the rise in crime.

The voices of those cut out of the deal are starting to make themselves heard. "There's a lot of hatred and bitterness from the last two years that is almost impossible to eradicate," says a development worker who has lived in the Lundas for four years. "Poverty is worse, prices are shooting up." — *The Observer*

Junta aims to cut Sudan's strongman down to size

Shyam Bhatia in Cairo

ISLAMIC strongman Sheikh Hassan el-Tourabi, de facto ruler of Sudan, has told his supporters to arm themselves for a bloody confrontation with the military regime of General Omar al-Bashir.

After five days of demonstrations in Khartoum and other cities, Sheikh Tourabi and his National Islamic Front are engaged in a battle for survival. Sudanese exiles in Cairo say the front's lorries were seen last week unloading Kalashnikovs for Sheikh Tourabi's gangs, which had until then been using knives and axes to intimidate demonstrators.

The government says six people have died in the unrest, which started when the front interfered in a debate at Khartoum University, but the opposition puts the death toll at more than 40.

The Sorbonne-educated Sheikh faced another challenge last week, this time from abroad, when Egypt said that it was downgrading its diplomatic relations with Khartoum. The decision follows weeks of angry exchanges between the two governments stemming from the assassination attempt on Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak in late June. The president's motorcade was ambushed in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, but Egypt and Ethiopia say that the gunmen were acting on the instructions of Khartoum.

Sheikh Tourabi has been accused by western intelligence experts of exporting Islamic terrorism to neighbouring countries. His militants see the Egyptian president's moderate pro-western policies as their biggest obstacle.

In Addis Ababa last week, the Egyptian foreign minister, Amr Moussa, told Organisation of African Unity officials that he had evidence of 20 terrorist training bases in Sudan. Israel has accused Khartoum of training members of the fundamentalist movement Hamas.

Although he has no official position in Sudan, Sheikh Tourabi runs the country from behind the scenes, providing Gen Bashir's junta, which took power in 1989, with political and religious legitimacy. But Sudan's growing international isolation is undermining this partnership. Sheikh Tourabi embarrassed the junta last year when it emerged that the world's most feared terrorist, Carlos the Jackal — now awaiting trial in France — was living a life of heavy drinking and nightclubbing in Khartoum. This was the first tangible evidence that Khartoum had replaced Beirut as the hub for Middle East terrorists.

But the attempt on Mr Mubarak's life is being cited as the main reason for the impending split between the Sheikh and the generals.

"It seems it's going to be a bloody divorce," says Mubarak al-Mahdi, London-based spokesman for an alliance of Sudanese opposition parties. "The information we have is that 45 people have been killed so far in the demonstrations. The government is burying the victims without their families' knowledge, and the Doctors' Syndicate in Khartoum has condemned the brutality against the demonstrators. Doctors have treated hundreds of civilians for broken hands, fingers and legs."

A Sudanese journalist in Cairo says: "I think it is clear that the Sudanese army does not want to be at the receiving end of international sanctions, like Iraq or Libya. They are beginning to realise that el-Tourabi's ideas do not represent true Islam."

The National Islamic Front is also blamed for the shocking deterioration of the economy. Its ideologues have failed to fulfil their promise of using the Koran to improve standards of living.

Some families cannot even afford the luxury of dying. A death certificate, which used to be free, now costs 150 Sudanese pounds — the equivalent of only 25 US cents, but the average income is about $5 a month. A loaf of bread costs 10 cents, and a kilo of beef at $2 is beyond the reach of most families.

The generals have used popular dissatisfaction with the front as an excuse to dislodge el-Tourabi loyalists from key jobs in the administration. And as tensions rise within the government, some of his henchmen have started to smuggle their families out of the country.

Sheikh Tourabi has refused to be drawn on his differences with the generals. Asked by visitors if he keeps the presidential seal locked in a drawer at home, he smiles and points out that he has no official position. Yet every Sudanese knows the assets at his command are far greater than any government official could dream of. He is one of the country's richest men, with a controlling interest in hotels, shipping and import-export businesses; and his agents have cornered the local arms bazaar and a gold souk.

Such resources help him to finance the front and its militias. And as they face the angry mobs on the streets of Khartoum, the front's leaders always have the benefit of Sheikh Tourabi's spiritual guidance. Last week he rallied faint hearts by telling them: "A Muslim is not allowed to start violence — but he is allowed to answer back with violence if someone else starts it." — *The Observer*

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Lib Dems refuse to cross the 'clear yellow water'

LABOUR'S LEADER, Tony Blair, managed to upstage the Liberal Democrats' annual conference this week by extending what sounded like an offer of co-operation. He said he was prepared to discuss key policies with the Lib Dems before an election, and to discuss legislation with them afterwards, even if Labour had a comfortable overall majority.

Privately, at least, the offer may well be welcome to the Lib Dems' leader, Paddy Ashdown. Publicly, however, he continues to insist that he is not cosying up to Mr Blair. The two parties can and do co-operate harmoniously in local government, but many Lib Dem activists need to feel they still have a clear identity, and fear the damage they could sustain if a vote for their centre party were to be seen as a kind of proxy vote for Labour.

An opinion poll last week suggested that more than one-third of those who plan to vote Lib Dem at the next election will do so because they want to stop a Tory or a Labour candidate, not because they support the party's policies. The Lib Dems are seen differently across the country: sometimes (though now less often) as close to the Tories; sometimes as closer to Labour; and sometimes as equidistant.

Mr Ashdown has now abandoned the pretence of equidistance — he says he could never sustain a Tory government in power — in favour of a broad centre-left stance, but still aims to keep "clear yellow water" between his party and Labour. This involves commitments to public services such as health and education with straight talking on taxation to sustain them.

THE GOVERNMENT, by contrast, is hell-bent on reducing personal taxation as a means to electoral revival and is looking for deep cuts in public spending to bring it "well under" 40 per cent of GDP. The social security budget of £73 billion — £15 a day for each working person — is considered too large a burden for the country to sustain, and is a prime target for the knife.

Even at the present level of spending, the welfare regime is becoming ever harsher and benefits harder to get. The Employment Service admitted this week that, under an unwritten formula, unemployed adults were being required to take jobs at £3 an hour or less or lose their benefit. This is well below the £4.15 which trade unions consider should be the national minimum wage.

A SERIOUS OUTBREAK of Aids hysteria swept the Irish Republic when the government said it was investigating claims by a Catholic priest that a woman had deliberately infected up to 80 men with HIV.

Father Michael Kennedy, a cousin of US Senator Edward Kennedy, alleged from his pulpit in Dungarvan, Co Waterford, that a 25-year-old London woman had taken revenge on the men of the area after contracting the virus herself in England.

The local inhabitants, happy to interpret Aids as divine retribution for sin, seemed at first to take the priest at his word until the media circus moved in on their little town (pop 7,000) and started asking questions. It turned out that the crusading Fr Kennedy had been less than diligent in his investigations.

He had, indeed, counselled five young men who had tested positive for HIV, but he had no definite proof — only a "strong belief" — that they had slept with the "Angel of Death". Neither had he asked them if they had had sex with anyone else; if they had ever been intravenous drug users; or if they had slept with each other.

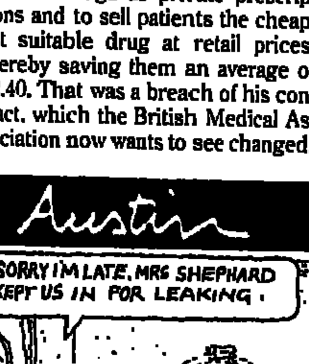
Dr James Walsh, Ireland's national Aids co-ordinator, said that the likelihood of a woman infecting a man on first contact was as low as 500-1. Others put it even lower, at 1,000-1. The Angel of Death could hardly have been that industrious during her five months in Ireland.

THE BIRTH, in Manchester, of Britain's first Siamese twins for a decade unleashed a debate — high in principle but low on compassion — about whether the parents should have received more counselling about the pros and cons of abortion as against continuing with the pregnancy.

The twin girls were joined from the chest to the upper abdomen, sharing a liver and possibly other organs, but doctors portrayed the prospects for separating them as good. On their third day, however, they underwent an 11-hour operation to disentangle their twisted bowels.

It was the fifth pregnancy involving Siamese twins to be handled by the Manchester hospital in the last five years. Two couples decided to terminate their pregnancies and two others, both from abroad, were delivered but died.

THERE WAS widespread public support for a Gwent pharmacist, Allan Sharpe, who was fined £500 for trying to save patients money. The official charge for an NHS prescription is now £5.25, though the medicines prescribed often cost less than that. His offence was to treat NHS prescriptions for generic drugs as private prescriptions and to sell patients the cheapest suitable drug at retail prices, thereby saving them an average of £2.40. That was a breach of his contract, which the British Medical Association now wants to see changed.





Sealed with a kiss . . . Professor Stephen Hawking and his bride, Elaine Mason PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN

Brief history of a best-seller's wedding day

PROFESSOR Stephen Hawking last week married his former nurse at a small ceremony in Cambridge and declared: "It's wonderful. I have married the woman I love," ***writes Alex Bellos.***

The couple posed for about 50 photographers outside the town's register office as the bride, Elaine Mason, aged 45, said: "I love him very much. He's the coolest man I know."

She met Professor Hawking, aged 53, who has motor neurone disease, when his first wife Janet hired a team of 15 nurses to look after him 24 hours a day.

Elaine moved in with the scientist — a millionaire from his best-selling book, A Brief History of Time — when his 25-year marriage broke up four years ago.

By coincidence, the new Mrs Hawking's former husband, David, a Cambridge-based engineer, designed Professor Hawking's voice synthesiser, his only means of communication.

Janet Hawking has said she thought their relationship "was ill-advised" but Elaine's mother, Muriel Lawson, said: "I think it is wonderful. Where's the controversy?"

Leak sinks Tory relaunch

Patrick Wintour and Rebecca Smithers

THE Government's all-day Cabinet strategy session ended in a public relations disaster last week with the leak of a memorandum by the Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, warning that education provision was being threatened by underfunding.

Mrs Shephard said education "should be one of our major success stories, but is not. There is a perception that schools are underfunded and the peace in the classroom is threatened." Admitting that the Government is "politically exposed" on education, she added: "Insufficient resources now threaten the provision of education in the state schools sector, including grant-maintained schools."

In an apparent swipe at the strategy adopted by John Major last week, when he promised an increase in the number of grant-maintained schools, Mrs Shephard pleaded with the Government to emphasise only standards.

The leak — to the Labour education spokesman, David Blunkett — will frustrate ministers since the document knocks the Government back in a key election battleground, and comes just as they felt that a Labour policy leak earlier in the week had handed the initiative back to the Government.

Mr Blunkett refused to reveal the source of the leak, and said the memo "undermines John Major's 16th attempt to relaunch his party".

He pointed out that Mrs Shephard also warns of the likely upward trend in unemployment, a coming voter backlash against the party's higher education plans and the introduction in October of the Job Seekers Allowance that merges income support and unemployment benefit.

She concedes an Opposition claim by saying: "Job insecurity and the fear of unemployment is holding back the feel-good factor and therefore the recovery."

Ministers had hoped to present the Chequers meeting as evidence of a government bubbling with new ideas for a fifth term, including policies to scale down the welfare state, improve competitiveness and toughen up law and order.

Mrs Shephard said in a statement: "The reports I have seen bear no relation whatsoever to the presentation I made to the Cabinet this morning. The Government is united in regarding education and training as vitally important. Attempts by the Labour Party to tarnish our achievements and invent divisions within the Government on the basis of these reports will not wash."

The deputy prime minister, Michael Heseltine, denied that Mrs Shephard wrote the memo. "It's not true so it is not embarrassing," he said. However, government sources conceded the memo, marked "Restricted policy, draft presentation strategy Cabinet", was genuine but subsequently revised.

Mrs Shephard's call in the memo for the Government to give less emphasis to the "mechanism of education delivery" suggests it may have been written before she knew the Prime Minister would make a speech presaging another wave of school opt-outs.

Shephard draft reveals opt-out muddle

THE leaked draft of Gillian Shephard's presentation to the ministerial brainstorming session at Chequers provides an extraordinary insight into how the business of government can go wrong when Downing Street starts making policy without consulting the departmental minister, *writes John Carvel.*

Perhaps the most lasting damage will be caused by passages which directly contradict the line taken by John Major in his speech to grant-maintained school head teachers in Birmingham on Tuesday last week, when he made clear that the central preoccupation of his education policy was to encourage more schools to opt out of local authority control. Yet Mrs Shephard says that such arguments should not overshadow the need to improve standards.

It is unlikely she was trying to fight a rearguard action against Mr Major's line; more probably at the time she wrote the document she did not know what his line was.

Conservative Central Office may have been telling the truth when its officials denied that the leaked draft formed the basis of her actual presentation.

Mrs Shephard did not discover there was to be a strategy Cabinet until about August 23. She had been expecting to be in South America last week on an educational sales visit, and can only have started to prepare the leaked presentation after this trip was aborted in the final week of August.

The implication is that Mr Major has been making up policy on his own. The commentary on Labour divisions is far too political to have been written by a civil servant, suggesting authorship by Mrs Shephard or her political advisers.

Free health service doomed, MPs told

David Brindle and Chris Mihill

THE National Health Service can no longer offer free comprehensive provision for all, according to an inquiry into the future of health care.

The inquiry, chaired by the former NHS chief executive, Sir Duncan Nichol, says that even if taxes are increased, no government will be able to raise funds to meet rising public expectations of health care, the growing costs of medical technology and the greater health needs of an ageing population.

Calling for a public debate about what the NHS should provide, the inquiry says that options include charging for some treatments, allowing patients to pay for extra services and rationing care according to its relative importance.

The findings of the inquiry team will embarrass ministers. Only last week, the Government rejected as alarmist broadly similar comments by Rodney Walker, retiring chairman and now president of the NHS Trust Federation. Mr Walker called for recognition of what he described as the diminishing capacity of the NHS to meet all health care demands.

To add to ministers' difficulties, the Royal College of Physicians called for a national rationing committee to advise government, health authorities and doctors on what treatments are allowable and which should be given low priority.

Sir Leslie Turnberg, the college's president, said: "There is a drive for more and more care, for more and more people, who want more and more done for them. There is an inexorable rise in costs and it is clear — increasingly clear — that we cannot do everything."

The Nichol inquiry, funded by the pharmaceutical industry and called Healthcare 2000, brought together leading doctors, health economists and patients' representatives with a view to producing a definitive report on the future of health care.

Its 12-strong steering committee was believed, with one exception, to have strongly endorsed the principle of a tax-funded NHS. However, it has found that there is a widening gap between the nation's needs and the resources to meet those needs. The NHS budget already stands at £41 billion.

If charges are to be introduced for some treatments or for better or faster care, the committee says, there must be open discussion of the implications for the 47-year-old principle that treatment is offered without regard to income.

Similarly, there must be an open debate about rationing of services. Noting that ministers have refused to have such a debate, and arguing that it is up to local health authorities to determine spending priorities, the committee says rationing by stealth is unacceptable.

The college wants its proposed national committee on rationing to be independent of government and to comprise doctors, members of the public, health managers, economists and ethicists. Such a body would not decide which operations should be banned, but would give general advice and monitor rationing decisions.

Sir Leslie said rationing was inevitable, and clear and open guidelines were needed. The college's call was welcomed by doctors' leaders. The British Medical Association said it was important that there was a national debate about rationing, and that decisions should not be determined locally with widespread variation.

Falklands oil deal agreed

Ian Black

FALKLAND Islands leaders were this week debating an Anglo-Argentine agreement to co-operate over oil exploration in the disputed waters off the South Atlantic dependency, but Britain insisted there were no implications for the islands' sovereignty.

Foreign Office officials confirmed that a draft agreement, which has been under intense negotiation for months, now needed only the approval of the islanders and ministers. But they denied any link to the future of a British arms embargo in force against Argentina since the 1982 war.

The landmark deal would establish a joint Anglo-Argentine hydrocarbon commission to oversee the issuing of oil exploration licences.

The Falklands intend to start issuing licences early next month, but Argentina has threatened to fight any attempt to issue licences unilaterally, and it is feared that big applicants will be put off by the prospect of legal disputes if no agreement is reached.

Suki Cameron, the Falklands' London representative, said the decision of the eight-member council — the islands' ruling body — would not be made public until it had been given to the Foreign Office and Buenos Aires. A split between the elected councillors is likely.

"If councillors felt that anything would be detrimental to our sovereignty, they wouldn't accept it," Ms Cameron said. "But we don't yet know all the details."

Robert Elgood, vice-chairman of the Falkland Islands Association, a lobby group protecting the islands' rights, said: "Of course there is anxiety, but it is very good news for the islands if there is an agreement."

The Foreign Office was anxious to calm fears on the highly sensitive question of sovereignty. "This is all entirely separate from sovereignty, which is and remains in dispute," a senior official said. He denied reports of a link to the arms embargo, which has been in force since the 1982 war. "While the Argentine government maintains its claim and occasionally makes statements that suggest they are going to prosecute it, it seems sensible to keep the embargo."

Tunnel crisis hits finance panel

Rebecca Smithers and Patrick Donovan

SIR Alastair Morton has been forced to step down as head of the panel leading the Government's faltering Private Finance Initiative (PFI) because of the deepening crisis at Eurotunnel.

His departure comes at a time of increasing concern about the slow progress being made by the scheme, designed to secure more private sector finance for public projects and launched two years ago by Chancellor Kenneth Clarke. Mr Clarke said in a statement that Sir Alastair's move was temporary and his place as chairman would be taken by industrialist Christopher Bland, who is also on the panel.

But industry sources said they doubted Sir Alastair would return, given the amount of work facing him as co-chairman of the Channel tunnel's Anglo-French operator. Eurotunnel's banks have halted interest payments on nearly £8 billion of debt, after three re-financing exercises failed. Competition from the ferries during the company's first, critical summer season led to a massive shortfall in expected revenue.

Sir Alastair explained the depth of the crisis to Mr Clarke last week and told him of his plans to step down. But a Treasury source said on Sunday: "If Sir Alastair hadn't raised it, then Ken certainly would have done."

Mr Clarke said it was clear that Sir Alastair "will face a tremendous burden of work in the coming months" and hinted there might be a conflict of interest, given that Sir Alastair "will be raising a number of issues with the British and French governments". Among these is the prospect of legal action against the Government for failing to build the £2.7 billion high-speed railway link between London and Folkestone.

Mr Clarke hand-picked Sir Alastair to chair the PFI panel nearly two years ago. He believed Sir Alastair's track record in seeing the complex £10 billion Channel tunnel project through to completion and his City and political contacts would be invaluable to the development of the PFI, which is designed to take pressure off public spending.

Labour's City spokesman, Alistair Darling, said: "It is not surprising that Sir Alastair wants to spend more time with Eurotunnel because of the clear failure of the PFI, which has become embroiled in red tape and has no clear strategy."

Financial fairy tales, page 23

Blair tells unions times have changed

Lawrence Donegan and Patrick Wintour

TONY BLAIR rounded on critics of his attempts to modernise the Labour party last week and said that, without the changes, the party would be condemned to the "futility of opposition".

In a direct response to the furore surrounding the leaking of plans to reduce trade union influence within the party and "centralise" its structure, the Labour leader told delegates at the TUC conference in Brighton that he would not be deflected from the leadership style he had adopted since succeeding John Smith last year.

"I do it because I believe the society I want to create is not some fantasy or dream — it can come true. But it cannot come true if we do not have the guts, discipline, decency and honesty to tell it to the people like it is, and rebuild this country as a great nation again.

"I did not join the Labour party to join a party of protest, I joined it as a party of government and I will make sure it becomes a party of government."



Mr Blair used the speech, his first to the TUC as party leader, to lay out ground rules for Labour's future relationship with the unions. He made no concessions to his internal party critics.

"There will be no repeal of all Tory trade union laws. Strike ballots are here to stay. No mass or flying pickets. All those ghosts of time past. They are exorcised, leave them where they lie . . . we must move beyond the sterile debates of the seventies and eighties."

The Labour leader said he did not want more distance between his party and the unions but "more clarity".

"The Labour party was born out of the trade unions in a different time and in a different political era. It will always have a relationship with the unions but the nature of that relationship and how it is expressed will, of course, change over time. We will govern for the whole nation — not any vested interest within it," he said.

Mr Blair accused John Major of breaking promises on crime, tax cuts, inflation and the National Health Service. He urged the Government to abandon privatisation of the railway industry and deal with abuses of power by privatised utilities.

He later rejected claims that he was seeking a presidential leadership, and said the unified command structure referred to in a strategy document leaked to the Guardian was "common sense".

In his first direct remarks on the leaked document, written by close aide Philip Gould, Mr Blair rebutted its central claim that Labour was not yet fit to govern. He said: "If Labour is to govern Britain well, it had to transform itself from the way it was, not just a step by step adjustment, but a major quantum leap."

Mr Blair is this week expected to tell a meeting of the shadow cabinet that policy-making will continue to be co-ordinated by Robin Cook, the shadow foreign secretary; overseas strategy by Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor; the general election campaign by Tom Sawyer, the party general secretary; and Mr Prescott will oversee party organisation and his regional economic commission.

Mr Blair's aides tried to dismiss a report at the weekend that Mr Prescott had been snubbed in March when he had not been informed of a meeting to discuss campaigning and economic strategy, attended by Mr Blair and Mr Brown, Mr Blair's press secretary Alistair Campbell, the director of communications Joy Johnson, the Hartlepool MP Peter Mandelson, and Mr Sawyer.

News of the meeting comes five days after it became known that Mr Prescott had not been given a copy of the confidential memo which was leaked to the Guardian.

Mr Prescott's allies were anxious not to let the controversy spiral, and they expect the Prescott-Blair relationship to survive.

Unions back new legal rights

Seumas Milne

THE TUC voted last week for repeal of all anti-union laws, the restoration of the freedom to take solidarity action and the creation of a legal right to recognition where unions have more than 50 per cent support at a workplace.

In a package of union and employment rights that goes well beyond Labour's existing commitments, delegates to the TUC conference in Brighton also supported legal protection from dismissal for strikers and employment rights for all workers from the first day in a job.

In its potentially most far-reaching new departure, the congress agreed a step-by-step system for enforcing a statutory right to representation, which would guarantee all workers the individual right to union representation.

Where a union has more than 10 per cent membership of a "bargaining unit", it would have the legal right to be consulted by the employer.

Where it could win more than 50 per cent support, there would be a legally enforceable right to collective bargaining. A representation agency would adjudicate on how representative a union was.

The formula fleshes out Tony Blair's commitment to a right to recognition, and has been welcomed by Labour's employment spokeswoman, Harriet Harman. But Ian Lang, the Trade Secretary, said last week that the attempt to force employers to recognise unions would "reopen the way for the militancy of the 1960s and 1970s".

An attempt by the National Union of Journalists, which has been badly hit by derecognition, to extend the right to recognition to any group of workers who wished to be represented by a union was rejected on the recommendation of the TUC General Council.

John Foster, NUJ general secretary, warned that the proposed trigger percentages could end up undermining existing recognition agreements, and that the employers would "seek to establish a bargaining unit that suits them".

● Controversy over the minimum wage arose as trade unionists queued to demand a rate of at least £4 an hour, despite a deal brokered before the conference not to fix a figure.

While delegates voted through the union leaders' weekend compromise — which supported the formula of half male median earnings, but avoided mentioning hard cash and thereby embarrassing the Labour party — the majority of unions made clear they are still determined that the TUC should opt for £4 or £4.15 when it finally backs a figure.

Seafarers' anchorman

OBITUARY

Sam McCluskie

THE ROLLICKING, redoubtable former leader of the National Union of Seamen, Sam McCluskie, has died aged 63 after a prolonged battle against cancer. He reached high office in the Labour movement, holding the post of treasurer then chair of the Labour Party, and was held in considerable affection by his colleagues.

He was a big, broad man, with a rolling gait, as though years of his early life at sea had left an indelible mark. His jovial, outward appearance belied his true nature. He was as tough as a board and in a union like the seamen, with its membership scattered round the world, he was often involved in controversial internal battles, which finally brought him to the top of the organisation after much blood-letting.

He first came to national prominence during the 1966 seamen's dispute. It led to himself and others being castigated by Harold Wilson, then prime minister of a government facing increasing problems with the unions, as part of "a tightly knit group of politically motivated" men. Wilson damned him publicly but it only served to enhance his growing reputation in the NUS.

Sam was born in Leith, the port of Edinburgh, and first went to sea in 1950 as a cook working on coasters for £30 per month.

First elected as a lay member of the NUS in 1963, he was appointed a full-time official two years later and served as general secretary from 1986 to 1991.

His leadership of the NUS was bedevilled by the 1988 P&O ferry dispute. It was one of the last set-piece confrontations between a determined employer and a trade union, and led to the demise of the NUS.

Fortunately, the NUS had many friends. It was eventually rescued by railwaymen's leader, Jimmy Knapp, and the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union (RMT) was formed with McCluskie as an executive officer.

As Labour Party chairman, McCluskie saw Militant come and go. He referred to the movement as "poison" and admitted he had formed a distrust of the Eastern bloc after trips there during his time as ship's cook.

Sam retired quietly in 1991. He enjoyed sport, particularly greyhound racing (in common with several union leaders, he owned one) and watching Glasgow Celtic. He had a big heart, a gentle demeanour, and was a lovable rascal.

Keith Harper

Sam McCluskie, trade unionist, born August 11, 1932; died September, 15, 1995

In Brief

NUCLEAR Electric, the [...] tor of Wylfa power [...] Anglesey, has been fined £250,000 for waiting nine [...] before closing a damaged [...] tor. It later shut down a [...] reactor at the Dungeness [...] tion in Kent as a "precaution[...] measure" after it was found [...] part of the refuelling mach[...] had been damaged.

Nuclear nerve, pa[...]

HUMAN rights groups ar[...] concerned that British [...] lice are training officers fro[...] Salvador and Guatemala, [...] assassinations and torture [...] security forces and civilian [...] groups are rife.

WHITEHALL turned a [...] eye for more than a y[...] plans by Ordtec, a British [...] company, to sell military [...] ment to Iraq in breach of [...] controls, according to evid[...] given secretly to the Scott inq[...]

LOYALIST representatives [...] met the Northern Ireland [...] Secretary, Sir Patrick May[...] at Stormont as the impasse [...] decommissioning paramilit[...] weapons continued to bed[...] the peace process.

BAT Industries, the Britis[...] tobacco giant whose bra[...] include Silk Cut and Benson [...] Hedges, knew as early as 19[...] that addiction was the main [...] son for smoking, despite con[...] stant claims to the contrary [...] the last 30 years, according [...] the United States Food and Drugs Administration.

THE Department of Trade [...] Industry, which is leading [...] drive to reduce Whitehall sp[...] ing, has emerged as the second [...] biggest spender on consultan[...] advice about privatisation and [...] market-testing. The Ministry of [...] Defence is the biggest. The Conservatives have spent £[...] million on such advice since coming to power in 1979, ac[...] cording to Labour figures.

THE BAR is to adopt a fi[...] point strategy to tackle sexual harassment, which ma[...] include providing havens for barristers forced to leave cha[...] bers because of unwelcome sexual advances.

ALMOST 3,000 men and women in the Royal Air Force have been made redun[...] dant, the first phase in planned cuts of 8,600 jobs.

CHARITIES and opposition parties reacted angrily [...] ports that Britain's overseas [...] budget is to be slashed by 1[...] per cent over three years. They said the proposed cuts would have a devastating effect on the Third World.

ACTOR Jeremy Brett, who played Sherlock Holmes in the ITV series, has died of heart failure. He was 59.

Basic science seen as 'key'

Tim Radford

A FALL in spending on "pure" or basic research could have far-reaching consequences, Sir Martin Rees, the Astronomer Royal, has warned the Government.

Sir Martin, president of the British Association's annual science festival, meeting in Newcastle upon Tyne last week, said basic research — widely seen by scientists as under threat from government policies — paid unforeseeable dividends.

In 1937 the US National Academy of Sciences set up a study to predict scientific breakthroughs, he said. "Its report makes salutory reading for technological forecasters today. It came up with wise statements about agriculture, synthetic gasoline and synthetic rubber.

"But what's more important is the things it missed. No nuclear energy, no antibiotics, no jet aircraft, nor rocketry, nor any use of space; no computers, certainly no transistors. This committee overlooked the technologies that dominated the post-war era."

Laptop computers, camcorders and supermarket bar codes all depended on basic science that dated back only 20 years. The recent discovery of startling carbon structures known as fullerenes came from studies of dust between the stars.

A new attempt to predict breakthroughs might have a hit rate as dismal as the US attempt in 1937. "The most dramatic and fruitful innovations will still surprise us," Sir Martin said. "They'll be the outcome of some new basic science, but of course we don't know what.

"Applications that are transforming the way we live are initiated by investments in basic research that were modest in relation to their impact. Some projects paid off colossally, other's didn't."

X-rays, discovered 100 years ago and of manifest benefit, could not possibly have been planned for. "A proposal to make flesh appear transparent would not have got a research grant — even if it had, it surely wouldn't have led to X-rays," he said.

"A 19th century project to reproduce music would have led to elaborate pianolas or orchestrions but wouldn't have identified — still less accelerated — the technologies that achieved this goal."

The British Association's annual meeting is, and has been for more than 160 years, the biggest public display of science and scientific debate. Darwin's theories were debated there and Brunel announced his steamship plans.

For the first time in years, no Cabinet minister was present. British science had a voice in Cabinet until the summer reshuffle placed the Office of Science and Technology at the Department of Trade and Industry. Now it is the responsibility of Ian Taylor, junior DTI minister.

The BA invited John Major to open a European Union contest for young scientists, launched at the meeting last week. He could not accept. Mr Major was in Newcastle anyway last Monday, talking to local Tories. "It is quite disgusting that the Prime Minister is not prepared to walk five minutes down the road to the biggest science festival in this country," said Ian Fells, an energy scientist of Newcastle university.

Sir Martin was more diplomatic: "We understand that this particular trip was arranged at rather short notice."

● Students entering university are worse at mathematics than they were 10 years ago, as constant educational reforms and changes have led to a crisis in its teaching, the meeting was told this week, *writes Chris Mihill.*

John Hogan, Bristol university professor of mathematics and president of the association's mathematical sciences section, said: "Students entering university this year to study engineering, science and mathematics know less than they did 10 years ago, have trouble solving all but the simplest problems, need more spoon-feeding, cannot handle simple mathematical expressions and have little idea of the concept of proof."



Wasted opportunity . . . Harold Kroto, of Sussex university, with a molecular model of carbon allotrope C-60, which he helped to discover 10 years ago in the dust of interstellar space. There are now more than 100 patents on uses of buckminsterfullerene, a third form of carbon first discovered by British and other scientists, but none of them is British PHOTOGRAPH: TED DITCHBURN

Black athletes have 'something special'

Tim Radford on how the man who broke the four-minute mile has courted controversy with a speech to scientists

SIR ROGER BANNISTER, who in 1954 broke the psychological barrier of the four-minute mile, last week sprinted back into controversy when he told a gathering of scientists that black athletes seemed to have natural anatomical or physiological advantages.

His address on the limits of the human machine, to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Newcastle, concerned itself only with athletics and human adaptation, and carefully avoided any other generalisation. But at the risk of what he called "political incorrectness", he said the number of black champions had led to interesting speculations.

"As a scientist rather than a sociologist I am prepared to risk political incorrectness by drawing attention to the seemingly obvious but under-stressed fact that black sprinters, and black athletes in general, all seem to have certain anatomical advantages. It is perfectly obvious when you see an all-black sprint final that there must be something rather special about their anatomy or physiology which produces these outstanding successes, and indeed there may be — but we don't know quite what it is.

"It may be their heel bone is a bit longer, or it may be that because of their adaptation to warm climates they have lower subcutaneous fat, so their power to weight ratio is better. Maybe they have an elasticity or capacity innately of the muscle fibres which contract quickly, which is some adaptation of the warmer environment."

Sir Roger, who followed his triumph on the track by becoming an internationally respected sports scientist and neurologist, predicted that some time in the next century the record for the mile might be lowered to three minutes 30 seconds. Candidates might be Kenyans who were born at altitude and had for generations breathed thin air.

"I like to think of them training while they are asleep, perfecting the transport of oxygen, which is the limiting factor."

The most likely runner to lower the record was the Algerian Noureddine Morceli, who has already achieved three minutes 44 seconds. "The indications are he could do this. He has trained quite a lot at altitude but I don't think he was born at altitude. So it is clear that by training it is possible to overcome many of the supposed disadvantages of not being born at altitude."



Bannister at his moment of triumph in 1954

Sir Roger trained for half an hour a day in his battle for the title against John Landy at the Empire Games in 1954. One of his team mates smoked the occasional cigarette for the benefit of the press. Modern runners train for more than two hours daily, although overtraining has brought problems.

Sir Roger said rich nations with better coaches stood better chances, but small and poor African countries had often produced, almost miraculously, world champions.

He said he did not feel sensitive about the question of racial grouping and superiority. "I suppose it is unusual to find a form of human activity in which one group of individuals appears to have a natural advantage, whether genetic or environment or upbringing.

"They could have been Eskimos or Finns but it just so happens for this particular type of activity — whether you think it is important or unimportant is a matter of choice — they now dominate these particular events."

Sir Roger later said he realised some people found the issue of racial differences in sport to be sensitive: "I don't think it is sensitive and that's why I made the point," he said. "It seems to be perfectly obvious if you observe a phenomenon and you are a scientist you seek to explain the causes of it."

European survey finds British best car thieves

Stephen Bates in Brussels

IT'S official: the French drink the most alcohol, the Greeks smoke the most cigarettes, the Scandinavians are the most suicidal and the British have the most efficient car thieves and the youngest unmarried mothers.

Such statistical comparisons have been gathered together with much weightier matters — ranging from fertility rates to grassland areas — in a 500-page survey by the European Commission's statistical office in Luxembourg. They call it their first-ever spotlight on the human condition.

The tables, based on the period between 1982 and 1993 and designed to show just how on the ball the Commission is, are divided into five sections covering the people of Europe, the land and environment, national income and expenditure, trade and industry, and the European Union.

They show that the highest life expectancy in Europe is among French women — who struggle on to 81.5 — and the lowest is among Portuguese men, who only reach 70.7.

This may or may not have something to do with the fact that the Portuguese come out as the worst drivers, with the highest overall death rate on the roads at 45 per 100,000, 4½ times as high as the Swedes.

On the other hand, deaths from heart disease are three times as high in the UK, Ireland and Finland, at 300 men and 150 women per 100,000, than in France or Spain where the respective rates are 100 and 50.

The statistics bear out cultural attitudes too — in Sweden and Denmark about half of all live births are taking place out of wedlock, compared with a third in the UK and France, but only 7 per cent in Italy and 3 per cent in Greece.

The charts show that the French drink the most, an average of just under the equivalent of 15 litres of pure alcohol a year — though the figure used to be nearer 18 litres — compared with the abstemious British, who manage to knock back only nine litres, which makes them one of the lowest drinkers in Europe. Only the Scandinavians drink less than we do, perhaps because of the heavy tax on alcohol.

Only 78 per cent of Britons are alleged to consider work the most important thing in life, compared with 99 per cent of Italians, but 93 per cent of us rate our friends very highly, as opposed to the Belgians, only 77 per cent of whom rate friendship as important.

Just a third of Britons believe religion is important, a lack of interest exceeded only by the former communists of East Germany.

As for crime, Britain has one of the highest rates in Europe, exceeded only by the high social-provision states of Scandinavia, but also one of the lowest murder rates, just 2 per 100,000 people in 1990, compared with tranquil Holland's surprising 15.

The British come into their own with sex offences, fourth behind the Scandinavians at 57 per 100,000, and easily top the league for car thefts — 977 per 100,000, compared with Ireland's 32. But the British still judge good manners to be the most important quality to encourage in children.

The European Commission hopes its survey will become an annual affair. The Eurostat Yearbook is being published in nine languages and will cost 30 ecus — £24.90.

What sort of peace in Bosnia?

IS THIS THE moment for which Bosnia has been waiting? Sarajevo's suffering has been both the most visible symbol of Bosnia's tragedy and a central political and territorial issue in the conflict. If the aid flights can resume, if the most threatening guns are withdrawn, if convoys no longer have to take a perilous mountain route, if those who live in Sarajevo can enjoy some hours outside on late summer days, then a minimum demand frustrated for the past three years will at last have been met. A winter with electricity, unshattered windows, affordable food and no more slaughtered children, begins to seem possible. That would be both a blessing for Sarajevans and a salve to guilty international conscience. But will this moment prove not just to have marked a turn for the better, but a real shift in the balance of internal and external forces capable of reversing the momentum for war? If so, what sort of peace?

Though the deal struck between the US envoy, Richard Holbrooke, and President Slobodan Milosevic can, without much difficulty, be found to be wanting in specifics, it should be judged as part of a larger picture. Yes, the Bosnian Serbs are no longer required to pull back their guns *before* the bombing stops — but it was never likely that they would accept such a humiliating ultimatum. Nor do the weapons which they have now agreed to withdraw include those of lesser calibres — but the original specification was set very low.

Yet the real meaning of the agreement lies less in these details than in how it was arrived at and who agreed to it. The Bosnian Serbs have over-reached themselves grievously in the past few months and are paying the price. The latest Muslim and Croat gains now reduce the unequal division of Bosnia from 70-30 in the Serbs' favour to something like 60-40, and this ratio may level further. The fact that Nato strikes have been used as leverage is significant quite apart from their military effect. If the agreement holds, and whatever wider diplomatic problems have been created, they will be seen to have "worked" and a future threat to employ air power will acquire greater credibility.

It remains true that this agreement and its likely direction can only be judged a Bosnian Serb capitulation in terms of the extravagant and irrational aims to which they had clung. The real measure of the deal is that it was actively brokered by Mr Milosevic — indeed, it was he, according to senior US officials, who proposed it, producing General Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic from a neighbouring room to sign it. Those who have always regarded the Serbian president as prime architect and puppet-master will see his action as shrewdly timed again. Delivering the Bosnian Serbs just when the bombing campaign was running out of targets and had begun to threaten the whole cold-war understanding with Russia, he was able to secure concessions which Mr Holbrooke then had to clinch with a glum President Alija Izetbegovic in Sarajevo. Most important, this is a deal struck in the aftermath of the Geneva agreement which has conferred international approval on the Bosnian Serb "entity". It is the impending division of Bosnia, not its re-integration, which has made a non-negotiating situation negotiable at last.

However the peace talks may now develop, they do so in an international context which has already been profoundly altered. The effect of excluding Moscow from the western strategy of air attacks will paradoxically give the Russians rather more leverage in the next stage, or else run the risk of further alienation. The other consequence of US-Nato intervention is to devalue the UN's peacekeeping function even further and confine it to its humanitarian role. This may suit short-sighted critics of the international organisation — until the next time it is needed.

Bearing witness on a broad front

LABOUR is not the only organisation requiring a more centralised command structure. Greenpeace is in trouble too. A two-month campaign in the Pacific was scuppered on the first day by over enthusiastic activists, who disobeyed orders by taking the pressure group's main boats into the 12-mile exclusion zone around Mururoa atoll, allowing the French to capture both boats, the group's helicopter and a flotilla of inflatables. Months of planning and millions of pounds of investment in supplies were lost in a single day when the MV Greenpeace was seized. The MV Greenpeace was supposed to have been a mother ship, supporting the fleet of small craft which sailed out to protest against the French nuclear tests and acting as base for a series of clandestine night landing expeditions on the atoll. But instead of supporting the biggest ever sustained campaign by Greenpeace, the ship, with its months of supplies, was lost on day one. Now the over-eager activists who were fêted by the media on their arrests, are facing a "court martial" by the pressure group for "disobeying orders".

Pressure groups can hardly expect their recruits to demonstrate the unbending discipline associated with the SAS. By their nature, activists are passionate and provocative people. Yet many of Greenpeace's more successful clandestine coups have required military-style operations which have been carried off with aplomb. With this history behind them, the organisation's leaders had a right to expect the Pacific team to follow the carefully-crafted strategy. Even pressure groups are accountable — to their members and the people who support them. Greenpeace's 5 million worldwide members will be disappointed when they learn the true facts behind this month's operation — particularly if the French tests continue.

Greenpeace has had its divisions before. It was right in 1993 to reject the idea of co-operating with, rather than confronting, big industry. There is a role for co-operation but there are a large number of environmental organisations who can do that. Confrontation is still needed, as the Mururoa tests testify. Greenpeace has excelled at developing the old Quaker tradition of "bearing witness" on sites where wrong is being done. But it was wrong to opt for a narrower front of operations last year. Last week's revelation of the near-catastrophic failure of Britain's ageing Magnox power station in Anglesey is a useful reminder of this cause. If Britain's power stations are vulnerable, remember the frailty of east European nuclear energy sites. Three years ago Greenpeace produced a plan to shut down 16 Chernobyl-type east European power stations. Nothing much has happened since. Yet nuclear energy — particularly in Europe — remains an even bigger threat than nuclear bombs. It is time for wider Greenpeace witness.

The sea that turned to dust

IT WAS ONCE known as the blue sea: now it is a sea of dust. The UN conference which is meeting to discuss the fate of the Aral Sea has conceded defeat in advance. Its objective is not to reverse the sea's disastrous shrinkage, merely to prevent further losses. That is already a massive task.

Salt-laden dust from the dried up bed of the Aral and from desertified surrounding land can be detected as far away as the Himalayas. Millions of people living around the lake have not just lost their traditional sources of income but suffered a catastrophic decline in the quality — and length — of life. Nearly every child is born to a mother suffering from anaemia. Erosion from the exposed seabed, running at 100 million tons a year, blights the fertility of lands now far away from what was once the world's fourth largest lake.

The roots of this folly are relatively recent. Soviet planners in the 1960s encouraged water diversion for cotton irrigation. Some favoured a deliberate policy of emptying the lake and even proposed making the rivers that feed it flow the other way. But the folly continues even though no one can now plead ignorance. The Aral basin states talk collaboration but have failed to implement a previously agreed plan. Uzbekistan still persists in planting new land with cotton as old land becomes waterlogged and salt-laden. Kyrgyzstan siphons off water to generate power, then dumps the outflow uselessly in the desert. It is easier to issue declarations in favour of "sustainable development".

Soviet (mis)-planners are an easy and justified target but they were not alone. The World Bank has only recently shifted against large-scale irrigation projects, rejecting the Arun III dam in Nepal. It has already invested $40 million in research work on the Aral Sea. This is money well spent but more is needed: the lesson should be that Big is not Better but Worse.

A faltering hope begins to take flight

Jonathan Steele on the Serbs, Croats and Muslims who want Bosnia reintegrated

AS THE clouds of war over Bosnia apparently part for the first time for three years, a new landscape begins to emerge. Sun-lit is not the best description. Too much blood has been spilt, too much destruction wrought, too many refugees sent away in despair. But there is at least a prospect of some sort of civil society being rebuilt, in which the common denominator is not fear of one's neighbour, as it has been throughout the undermining of Yugoslavia's multi-ethnic structures and the collapse into war.

Can the new society revive the ethnic tolerance which once marked Bosnia out as a beacon of sanity in the Balkans? Or is postwar Bosnia going to be stained indelibly by the "cleansing" of the last few years, broken into a patchwork of entities where one nationality has the upper hand? Few people have put those questions as urgently as two delegations of Bosnians in London last week. In separate ways they represented the forgotten people of Bosnia, those who still offer some non-nationalist alternative.

Nationalism encourages war, and in turn is encouraged by it. The two feed on each other, making it hard for dissenters to speak out, and creating a united front where independence can be made to seem treachery. The presence of the two delegations was a reminder that, even under the centralising pressures of war, politics in Bosnia have not become totally monolithic.

One delegation represented the Serb Civic Council, plus the two Croat members of the Bosnian presidency. For obvious reasons they have a clear interest in preventing Bosnia becoming a Muslim-dominated state. The Serbs, in particular, feel concern. An estimated 150,000 Serbs still live in the territory now controlled by the Bosnian government. They have never been part of the statelet run by Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, and treat them as war criminals just as much as do the non-Serbs of Bosnia.

At present the Bosnian government area is described as a Muslim-Croat federation. It has been remarkably successful in its primary purpose, but as a long-term arrangement it is not the best option, not least because it excludes the Serbs.

To widen the options, the delegation from the Serb Civic Council favour a federative system embracing the whole of Bosnia, in which Serbs would also have rights. They do not specify how those rights would be made real, whether on a geographical basis through cantons as laid out in the Vance-Owen plan, or by other means. Clearly the present system of a collective presidency in which all nationalities are represented is not enough.

The other delegation in London last week consisted of politicians and civic leaders, linked to the Helsinki Citizens Assembly, who doubt the federative principle itself. They are Bosnia's true non-nationalists. They argue that while a federation is preferable to a state based on one nationality alone (as Cro[atia] and Serbia have in practice [be]come), it is still flawed. It fai[ls to] give specific recognition to oth[er] minorities, such as Jews. It creat[es a] political limbo for those who c[on]tinue to call themselves Yugosl[avs], either because they are the childr[en] of mixed marriages or because th[ey] resist ethnic identification out [of] principle. It forces people to thi[nk] ethnically, reducing every soci[al,] economic or political choice to th[e] question of who it benefits.

Arguing over such matters ca[n] seem like a luxury at this mome[nt]. This is a false perception. The [na]ture of the peace that people wa[nt] can have a crucial bearing on th[e] time needed to finish the war.

The first requirement now [must] be for the tentative truce establis[hed] around Sarajevo to lead to a wi[der] ceasefire throughout Bosnia. Th[e] military advances made by Bosn[ian] government troops and their Cro[at]ian allies in western Bosnia may [lift] morale in some quarters, but th[ey] carry within them the seeds of ne[w] misery as the refugee columns he[ad] north towards Banja Luka.

Under the peace plan accepted i[n] Geneva, the Serbs in the Mladi[c-]Karadzic camp were due to give [up] a large chunk of the territory th[ey] seized in the early part of the war.

For the other two sides to se[ize] territory by force before the ma[ps] are worked out is wrong for at lea[st] three reasons. It turns yet m[ore] innocent people into refugees. It fu[r]ther reduces the chances of a mu[lti-]ethnic Bosnia by intimidating a[nd] expelling people for no other rea[son] than that they are not of the sa[me] nationality as the incoming army. I[t] does not even have "historical ju[s]tice" behind it, because many of th[e] towns in western Bosnia captur[ed] last week were always wholly o[r] largely Serb. They were occupied b[y] Mladic's forces three years ago, no[t] seized. Capturing them does n[ot] mean that Croats and Muslims ar[e] regaining their homes. It is invasion.

THE CENTRAL weakness of the Geneva agreement was it[s] silence on the constitutional arrangements for an integrated Bosnia. Will the negotiators no[w] think more about politics or maps, human rights or land?

Only if the discussion moves to[wards] politics and human rights is there any hope of preserving a no[n-]nationalist Bosnia. Without it there will be no chance of encouraging the people of the Bosnian Serb entity, the so-called "Republika Srpska", of moving towards reintegration with the rest of Bosnia, rather than cementing their separation and looking towards Belgrade.

One of the more fascinating aspects of last week's unofficial London meetings was the presence of Milorad Dodik, one of eight dissidents in Karadzic's parliament. Meeting Bosnians from the other side of the war divide for the first time for three years, his message was that majority opinion in Republika Srpska seems more in [favour of] reintegration with Bosnia [if] only it has the chance to exp[ress it]self, free from the pressures [...] and the tyranny of Mladic.

If his analysis is right, it [is all the] more reason why this week's [tenta]tive peace around Sarajevo mu[st be] followed by a Bosnia-wide cea[sefire].

Arafat's torturers shock Palestinians

The PLO's secret services are using brutal practices learnt from the Israelis. **Shyam Bhatia** reports

AFTER her Palestinian tormentors sprayed her with tear gas and poured molten wax on her body, 24-year-old Iman Shihab took the line of least resistance and screamed: "I am a collaborator. I committed crimes of immorality. I had sex — just leave me alone."

The young Palestinian woman from the West Bank town of Ramallah has shocked human rights activists in Israel and the occupied territories with her chilling account of torture at the hands of young men acting on behalf of Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat's secret services.

Human rights, including freedom of speech, is a burning issue among Palestinians as the PLO prepares to take control of the West Bank. The experience of mass arbitrary arrests, torture and kangaroo courts in Gaza has prompted concern that human rights is at the bottom of Mr Arafat's agenda. Last month another Palestinian prisoner, the sixth in a year, died during interrogation in Gaza City's central prison.

Ms Shihab is only one of hundreds of Palestinians who have been interrogated by representatives of the six security organisations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Mr Arafat, as supreme commander, is the common thread linking Presidential Security, Preventive Security, Internal Security, Military Security, Force 17 and Force 18.

Asked why he required so many cloak-and-dagger institutions, Mr Arafat replied: "The Syrians have 14, the Egyptians have 12. I only have six to help me." Gazans who fear the midnight knock take foreign visitors aside and joke that all local dentists will soon be out of business because no one dares to open their mouth.

Since Mr Arafat's return home to Gaza in May last year, his super-sleuths have spread their tentacles into every Palestinian home and village across the Green Line, including Arab east Jerusalem. In the day-to-day life of ordinary Palestinians, these shadowy security experts make up the core of a parallel authority, pending the Israeli transfer of power to Mr Arafat's government.

But the preening young men armed with Kalashnikovs and pistols, who like to project themselves as freedom fighters, are in fact associated with a new tyranny mixed in with the limited home rule permitted by Israel.

In the Gaza Strip, the new Palestinian National Authority has recruited 20,000 policemen. "You must understand that here in Gaza we have one policeman for every 50 Palestinians," says a prominent human rights activist. "In Switzerland, which has one of the highest levels of security in the world, there is one policeman for every 3,000 citizens."

Ms Shihab's ordeal started late one afternoon as she was driving back from work at the Israeli civil administration where she is employed as a civil servant. Five young Palestinians driving a Japanese estate smashed into her car and pulled her out of the driving seat.

"One of them stood by me and hit me in the head with a pistol," Ms Shihab later told Palestinian human rights advocate Bassem Eid. "They dragged me to their car and shoved me inside. Passersby did not dare to approach because the fellows threatened them with guns and shouted that they were from the Palestinian Preventive Security Service [PSS]."

FOR THREE days she was held in abandoned homes and fields outside Ramallah. At one point the head of the gang, who identified himself as Abu Amjad, accused her of sexual immorality and of passing on information to the Israelis.

"Abu Amjad . . . took me to another room where he tied my hands behind my back and sprayed me with tear gas. I felt burns all over my body and I started to scream with pain. I begged for mercy. He started to melt candles on my body while telling me to confess.

"That went on until evening. Twice during the interrogation Abu Amjad pulled my nipples with pincers. He mentioned the names of two men with whom he said I had sex. I said I wanted a doctor to examine me to determine if I am still a virgin, but they refused.



Jibril Rajoub, head of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service, denies human rights abuses PHOTOGRAPH: EYAL WARSHAVSKY

"Then they asked me to take my clothes off, except for my underwear. I undressed. They tied my hand and one leg with rope and hung me from a tree. They began to beat me all over my body with a stick and rubber hoses. That lasted until the early morning hours."

Ms Shihab now says she cannot be certain whether the men who abducted her were from the PSS or another group. But Mr Eid, the human rights activist who recorded her testimony, says he has no doubt that the PSS was responsible. He has been in contact with many other victims of PSS torture in local prisons.

"My research is based on testimonies taken from Palestinians kidnapped from their West Bank homes and driven to detention centres in Jericho," he said. "These people stayed in detention from 20 days to three months without trial. All faced torture, which included beatings, sleep deprivation, lack of medical attention, tying-up and hooding. When one of them asked for water to drink, he was given urine. Another was given the liquid discharge from an air conditioner."

Veterans of Israeli jails make up the rank-and-file of the PSS. Its West Bank head, Colonel Jibril Rajoub, was held for 17 years in Israeli prisons before he was deported to Lebanon in 1988. Palestinians say it is no coincidence that the interrogation methods used by PSS agents mirror the tactics employed by Israel's own secret police, the Shabak.

Hooding, or covering the victim's head with a sack as he is beaten or questioned, is a trademark of the Shabak. In Arabic this form of torture is known as *shabah*, a word also used for ghosts and ghouls.

Now Col Rajoub's men take the law into their own hands by combining the role of judge, jury and executioner. One member of his force, Ahmed Tabuk, is an expert shot and a dedicated student of some of the brutal punishments more associated with Northern Ireland. Among terrified families in the West Bank city of Nablus, he is simply known as the "kneecapper".

Mohammed Nabil Fakher Eddin, aged 45, who was accused by the PSS of raping two young girls, told the Israeli human rights organisation Bt'selem of his encounter with the kneecapper. "Suddenly there were knocks at the gate. I saw six masked men who asked me to accompany them. I went with them to the PSS offices where they interrogated me about allegations of deviant sexual conduct with young girls. As they were beating me, I was able to push Tabuk. He took his pistol and started to shoot me in the knees and feet. I fell down. After I fell, he pulled me outside and left me on a garbage heap and started to shout, 'He is a girl rapist, he must be killed'."

None of the West Bank victims of the PSS has ever come before a court, nor have any been allowed access to a lawyer. A rudimentary system of justice exists in Gaza in the shape of the State Security Court, but this is a court only in name. Trials are held in secret.

"Trials in this court are grossly unfair, violating minimum requirements of international law," says a spokesman for Amnesty International. "State Security Court trials have been held secretly in the middle of the night. Some reportedly lasted only minutes. Those presiding are security force officers who apparently have never before served as judges."

Despite their obvious limitations, the judges of the court — whose identities remain a secret — have been given a free hand by Mr Arafat to rule on any issue that attracts their attention. Sayid Abu Musameh, editor of the local Al-Watan newspaper, was recently sentenced to three years' imprisonment for writing "seditious" articles. His newspaper was later forced to close.

Aware of mounting international concern, the Palestinian Authority has finally hit back. Last month the PSS head, Col Rajoub, held a press conference to denounce "politically motivated" human rights activists.

He refused to answer the charges of torture victims, but singled out Mr Eid as an "agent working for the Israeli police". In local terms, such an accusation is tantamount to a death sentence. Mr Eid, who has complained to Mr Arafat, said: "By calling me a police agent, Rajoub is trying to defend the PSS. In the process he endangers my life."

He is not the only one who has good reason to fear for his safety. Ms Shihab has been on an extended holiday since she was kidnapped and tortured. That experience destroyed her self-confidence. Now she is too frightened to walk out of her own front door. — *The Observer*

A sour taste at the Gulf sheikhs' feast of enrichment

Kathy Evans

THE wealth of the sheikhs and emirs of the Gulf states is the stuff of many legends that only occasionally surface in the West.

How sheikh so-and-so took up three floors of the Dorchester for his entourage; one king's personal jet has an operating theatre; a young Saudi prince broke the bank in Monte Carlo; or a sheikh sent his private plane to London to bring back a certain flavour of ice-cream.

Most of these stories are scurrilous gossip, but some are true — such as the young Gulf sheikh who had a different coloured Mercedes for each day of the week.

Such profligacy is considered the traditional privilege of the ruling sheikhs and their families. In the Gulf states, if you are a member of a ruling family, you receive a handsome stipend from birth, its amount varying on how close your relationship is to the king or emir.

When you are an adult, you will have no problem going into business, or securing government contracts or parcels of land worth millions. A really senior prince might even get a few barrels of discounted or free oil to sell.

At the top of these families, the privileges are even more extensive. The sheikh also owns all the land, which he can personally distribute. And in most Gulf states, the revenues from oil and gas are theoretically his personal income.

In practice, the revenues go to the ministry of finance, and from there, the emirs and kings can cream off a percentage for their personal use. But in many states, it is still the ruler who has to sign almost every cheque paid out by the government. State and ruler are, after all, indistinguishable.

Naturally, such wealth carries obligations. As a good Muslim, you might find yourself having to shell out a few million dollars to Bosnia or some other worthy Muslim cause. In addition, junior or female members of the family will expect regular hand-outs.

The percentage Gulf rulers award themselves out of the oil revenues varies. Naturally, such figures are never published and diplomats and International Monetary Fund economists can only make educated guesses about them.

Saed Abu Rich, author of the book House of Saud, believes the figure in Saudi Arabia may be up to $7 billion (£4.5 billion) a year out of estimated oil revenues of up to $50 billion a year. In other Gulf states, such as Abu Dhabi, the proportion is thought to be around 10 or 12 per cent, while in Qatar it is thought to be 25 per cent.

Kuwait's annual budget includes an item called the *emiri diwan* (the emir's palace) or the privy purse. It is known by everyone, and approved each year by the country's parliament. In in all the other states the line between public and ruler's money is still shrouded in mystery.

Most Gulf nationals do not resent, or simply do not know, the extent to which their rulers enrich themselves. These are belt-tightening times, however, and it is now clear, that governments can no longer continue to fund the enormous bills for free electricity, water, phones and health services that are the hallmarks of Gulf life. But the question is: if they cannot afford the subsidies, how can they afford to maintain the lavish lifestyles of their kings and sheikhs?

The issue of royal money and public money has emerged in dramatic form in the tiny state of Qatar, where a young sheikh, Hamed, deposed his father, Khalifa, in a bloodless coup. The question many Qataris are asking, however, is how much the peaceful coup is going to cost. Some estimates speak of a pension fund for the former ruler of $2.5-5 billion.

Western lawyers say access of Gulf states to the money of former sheikhs and deceased rulers will depend largely on whether they sought sovereign immunity for their assets. Under such regulations, foreign governments cannot tax such assets. But when they die or are deposed, the money can be claimed by their home state.

Pasternak's muse

OBITUARY
Olga Ivinskaya

IN 1961, the chairman of the Soviet Writers' Union replied to the International Pen Club's query about a prisoner of the Soviet state. "Ivinskaya is a 48-year-old woman, who since 1946, was known as the private secretary of Pasternak . . . In literary circles, Ivinskaya was known as an unscrupulous adventuress who advertised her intimacy with Pasternak."

The same Olga Ivinskaya, who has died aged 82, had been Boris Pasternak's lover for the last 14 years of his life and the inspiration for Lara Guishar, the heroine of his most famous work, Dr Zhivago. When the two met in 1946 Olga was working for the literary journal Novy Mir and Pasternak had buried himself in Shakespeare translations to avoid the attentions of Stalin's secret police.

It was, claimed Ivinskaya, love at first sight. She told the poet of her admiration for his work. He promised to lend her some out-of-print collections of his poetry and casually mentioned he was working on a novel. Within weeks Pasternak began work in earnest on the novel which, more than any other, described the fate of the intelligentsia in the Soviet Union's first five decades.

Ivinskaya was born in the provincial town of Tambov, where her father was a school teacher. The family moved to Moscow where she studied at Moscow State University. After graduation she wrote and translated poetry. Her first husband, the father of her daughter, Irina, hung himself and her second, Mitya, died in hospital, after, she suspected, denouncing her mother to the NKVD. In 1943 she started working at Novy Mir and remained there until 1948 when Pasternak suggested she become a full-time translator. In her reminiscences, A Captive Of Time (1978), she talks fondly of what Pasternak called the "shop" — their work as translators.

The idyll was broken by Alexei Surkov, head of the Union of Soviet Writers, who accused Pasternak of adopting "the pose of a recluse living outside time . . . speaks with an obvious hatred about the Soviet Revolution . . . Soviet literature cannot be reconciled with his poetry."

The state chose to physically attack Pasternak through Ivinskaya. In October 1949, pregnant with his child, she was arrested and, a year later, sentenced to five years' hard labour. In Parting, one of Zhivago's poem's from the novel, Pasternak describes the sudden disappearance of a lover:

From the threshold a man looks in
He cannot recognise his house.
Her departure was like a flight
And everywhere are signs of havoc.

It was one of many autobiographical episodes which, Ivinskaya claimed, made their way into the novel. It was four years before she returned from the camps following the amnesty after Stalin's death, by which time Dr Zhivago was nearly complete.

On her return, Ivinskaya moved with Pasternak and Irina to Peredelkino. There, in her official capacity as his secretary, she typed and edited the Zhivago manuscript.


Living Lara . . . Olga with her lover and mentor Pasternak

Pasternak was thrown out of the Writers' Union as a result of his Nobel Prize nomination in 1958 but it was not until 1960, just two months after his death, that the KGB moved in and arrested both Olga and Irina on foreign currency dealing charges. At a secret trial she was sentenced to eight years' forced labour and Irina to three.

In 1988 Olga was officially rehabilitated. An old lady, whose grey hair and thick glasses were far from the romantic image of Lara or her earlier beauty, she entertained foreign journalists in her Moscow flat in their search for the real Lara.

Isobel Montgomery

Olga Ivinskaya, born December 1913; died September 8, 1995

A Country Diary

Pamela O'Cuneen

SURINAME: **The heat in Paramaribo builds up all morning, until the air feels like a great amorphous electric blanket. At lunchtime the sky is schizoid — gunmetal grey on one side and on the other, pure cerulean blue with puffs of cloud that might grace a county cricket match. By mid-afternoon thunder is growling from all directions, and the rain begins to fall in big drops, faster and faster.**

A small yellow and black fly-catcher does happy pirouettes among the orange strelitzias. On the tin roof of the house next door, a shiny black karufowru enjoys a bath, opening and closing its wings like an iridescent purple and green umbrella. Two woodcreepers, which have worked so hard for their nest and fat offspring, stare from their crowded nest atop a veranda pillar, smug and cosy.

The rain gathers force until the garden is four inches under water. Just as suddenly it stops. After a moment of silence the tree frogs begin, small whistling creatures like little birds.

After dark, with the sky still undecided, I open the front door, and stand watching fire-flies turn their tail lights on and off, on and off, red, golden and green flashes among the folded hibiscus flowers, unexpected living Christmas lights dancing in the summer.

Letter from Tanzania Ann Gilchrist

Life among the big butterflies

WHEN I FIRST came to Geita, I thought I had arrived at the town at the edge of the world. But that was before I went to Karumwa. I now recognise Geita as a buzzing, cosmopolitan metropolis and Karumwa as teetering on the brink of the universe. Such claims may appear extravagant, but in northern Tanzania the already fragile infrastructure continues to decay and the social consequences of the economic and political turmoil of the eighties are being felt at town and village level.

Difficulty in collecting taxes from poor subsistence farmers, local government employees skilled in evasion — emulating many of their political masters — and large unregistered tracts of population means that district councils like Geita struggle to exist and the services they are supposed to provide are almost non-existent.

The last time there was sufficient cash to buy diesel to run the town's generator was Christmas Day 1992 — a surprise present for those whose homes are wired for electricity. In my (council-based) office I am the only person who finds it surprising that a pair of rust-rumped swallows should dart in and out of the glass-less windows, constructing an adobe nest on the vacant fluorescent-light fitting.

Given this scenario and the fact that the majority of the population walks everywhere, maintenance of the roads is a low priority. Geita straddles the B163, a dirty red artery to Mwanza in the east and to the refugee camps in Rwanda and Burundi in the west. Extensively reconstructed less than a year ago, largely with foreign aid, it is now disintegrating. The rainy season and the enormous aid lorries have carved their signatures across it, and other road users bear the consequences.

There is a strict traffic hierarchy, the penalty for ignoring it is serious injury or death. Chickens and goats are at the base of the ranking, followed by pedestrians, cattle, bicycles, *piki-pikis* (listen to the sound of a trail bike idling and understand the Swahili name), four-wheel-drives, small lorries, buses and finally the aid trucks. No car would survive the B163 for long.

Aged British Leyland coaches, with added roll bars, flourish despite the conditions. On a recent journey from Geita I elbowed my way, Tanzanian style, to a seat near the front of the bus. This enabled me to watch how the driver bump-started the bus and then to observe his skill in using the clutch to compensate for having no brakes. That was on the hills he could not negotiate by coasting down, hand on horn, ensuring everyone else took evasive action.

There was an added precaution as we came down the steep slope to the ferry that crosses an arm of Lake Victoria. The conductor leapt out with a large rock, kept on board for this purpose, and thrust it under a wheel when it looked as if we might pick up speed and hurtle into the water. But buses, even of this type, do not run to Karumwa. There was one man in Geita who used to own two buses, one running to Mwanza, the other to Karumwa. Two years ago, during the rains, the latter came to a tragic end failing to negotiate a temporary bridge. The rusting carcass lies there still, diminishing in size as it is recycled as cooking pots and building materials. There has been no replacement.

I went to Karumwa by four-wheel-drive, and on the 70km, four-and-a-half-hour journey saw no other motorised vehicles. Ox-carts and bicycles abounded, large dark green, sit-up-and-beg Chinese imports. In this part of the world they are used for transporting everything. I have even seen the body of an elderly man strapped to a board on the back of one of these bicycles, being returned to his home village for burial. You want a taxi? No problem, a pillow is tied on the luggage carrier and the passenger sits side-saddle for the trip. Frequently, women, shrouded in scarlet-saffron and flame-purple shawls, looking like enormous butterflies, use them, as do the elderly, ailing and wealthy.

The road is truly awful, made up of deep sand, terracotta mud, river crossings and huge crevasses. For the citizens of Karumwa, this is normal. For me, visiting this town at the beginning of nowhere, feelings of sympathy for people who can survive in these conditions were transformed into respect.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHY DO some bird species stand on one leg?

BIRDS that habitually stand on one leg tend to be waders (such as sandpipers and plovers) which feed on coastal mud flats that are covered by the sea for hours each day. When the tide is in, the water is often too deep for the birds to feed. They will, therefore, rest by the water's edge until the tide has retreated. During cold weather, such periods of inactivity can inhibit blood circulation in the birds' unfeathered extremities. This is why the resting bird will sometimes draw one foot up against the warmth of its belly, whilst supporting itself on the other leg. — *Mark Bravery, London*

BECAUSE if they lifted the other one they would fall over. — *Gareth Hoskins, Amanda Perrier, Denis Binns, Andrew and Alistair Whieldon, et al*

***IF ADOLF HITLER'S* parents had never met, would the second world war have happened?**

EVEN IF Hitler had not existed, there would have been war. The influence of fascism was strong throughout Europe, and eastern Europe's proximity to the Soviet Union's communism makes it likely that some kind of war would have broken out anyway.

But the question is how long would it have lasted, and would the Holocaust have happened? If not, how would the United States and the Middle East be today if millions of European Jews had not been exterminated or forced into a mass exodus? — *E R Morgan, Essex*

PARTICULAR individuals are responsible for the continual disasters which the human race creates for itself. Millions of people were involved in the war. For whatever reasons, whether consciously or unconsciously, we wanted a war and Hitler was the tool we used. Most of us prefer the illusion that it was all down to Hitler. If it had not been him we would have found somebody else. In an earlier age we would have blamed the Devil. — *David Hawley, London*

Any answers?

HAS anybody ever tried to decimalise time? — *David Craig, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire*

WHO (or what) is the Dick in Spotted Dick? — *Adrienne Taylor and Kay Corbet, Moens, France*

***IN THE* United States today, 1 per cent of the households control 40 per cent of the wealth. What were equivalent statistics for France in 1780, or Russia in 1917?** — *Charles Hixson, Bloomington, Indiana, USA*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ

France bans book critical of Algiers

The interior ministry has judged the work by a group close to the Islamic Salvation Front to be a 'call to hate', reports **Nathaniel Herzberg**

FRANCE will not allow the White Paper on Repression in Algeria, 1991-1994, to be distributed on its territory. The interior ministry has banned importation of the volume written by an "Algerian committee of free activists in the cause of human dignity and human rights" and published in Switzerland by Editions Hoggar.

The decision was made on August 17 at a time when Paris was subjected to a number of terrorist bomb attacks, but the announcement came only last week. The decree announcing the ban on the book states that "by reason of the call to hate that it contains, its distribution is liable to affect public order".

The decision has stunned the book's publishers in Geneva. "We didn't understand," said Abbas Aroua, a spokesman of the publishing house, referring to an incident at the end of June when a truck carrying 512 copies of the book was stopped by the border police and refused entry after the books had been subjected to close scrutiny. "But we told ourselves that it was perhaps yet another formality."

Two months later, however, the publishers were told the book was considered "ill-timed".

The publishers admit the book is political. By clearly showing that they favour "a democratic and social Algeria within the framework of Islamic principles", the authors acknowledge that they are members, or at least supporters, of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). It even appears that this committee of so-called "activists living in Algeria" in fact consists mostly of Islamic fundamentalist party members exiled in Switzerland.

This does not necessarily make it an inflammatory tract "inciting hate". Rather than a pamphlet, the work is, in fact, a compendium of eye-witness accounts of the horrors in Algeria. Incomplete and partial, the accounts relate in more than 200 pages the arbitrary arrests, tortures, death sentences and internment in "concentration camps" carried out by the Algerian authorities, while taking care not to include a single word about the Islamists' own violence.

These accounts, however, corroborate the observations of such recognised organisations as Amnesty International and Reporters Sans Frontières.

Then there is the 18-page introduction. Here the committee castigates the "pseudo-democratic military conspiracy" led by a "clique of generals"; the aid that "business and financial circles" are giving the Algerian government; the involvement of certain "so-called democratic" newspapers, whose journalists it brands as "nothing less than mercenaries of the pen"; and the "unconditional" support from some western countries.

While it applauds the "resistance" of some, the book stops short of explicitly calling on the Algerian people to take up arms or to punish France for its political choices.



'France washes whiter'

An interior ministry spokesman claimed that the book was a "danger". "Its underlying tone is anti-French," he said, "but more than anything else it is such a violent indictment of the Algerian regime that it could be understood as a call to hate.

"Where Algeria's internal problems are concerned, you could say they're not our problem. But here, its effect on people receptive to such proselytism could lead them into taking action likely to cause serious breaches of the peace."

Adding that the book's authors "are the same people who are sending propaganda video cassettes [to France]", the spokesman said the ministry had been warned by its Swiss counterpart to be on guard against a "dangerous group".

However, these arguments are not likely to cut much ice with the publishing community. On September 11, four French publishers protested vigorously against the banning of the book and asked the prime minister "to take the necessary measures to allow it to be distributed in our country".

They admit it is a partisan work. "Its authors call for the victory of the FIS . . . and avoid condemning the human rights violations for which armed Islamist groups are responsible. But so long as the work's contents do not breach any of the laws in force, it is intolerable that these accounts cannot be brought to the French public's attention.

"At a time when terrorist attacks attributed to Islamist extremists are affecting our country, banning a book condemning the repression in Algeria would go against the professions of neutrality in the Algerian conflict that the president has frequently made."

(September 14)

Chad's president treads on too many toes

Five years after helping Deby to take charge of his country, Paris is beginning to lose patience with him, writes **Thomas Sotinel**

OPPOSITION parties in Chad reacted sharply to the imprisonment in N'Djamena this week of Saleh Kebzaboh, two days after he had been arrested for having "contacts with the enemy". An opposition delegation went to see President Idriss Deby and asked for Kebzaboh's unconditional release within 72 hours.

A week ago they decided to withdraw from the transition structures — provisional parliament, reconciliation commission, election commission — now manned solely by the president's followers from the Patriotic Salvation Movement. Reports describe the situation in the Chadian capital as "very tense".

The imprisonment of Kebzaboh, who is well respected in Chad and abroad, is a result of the nervousness of the president's clan. The agitation has been caused as much by the *rapprochement* between opposition political parties and "politico-military" groups as by Paris's growing exasperation with a protégé — Deby overthrew Hissèn Habré in December 1990 with French help — who never wanted to become a good pupil of democracy or financial orthodoxy.

Four months ago Deby wrested from the provisional parliament a year's extension of the period for installing democratic institutions, due to be completed by presidential and parliamentary elections. He has replaced his prime minister, Delwa Kassire Koumakoye — who made no secret of his ambitions — with Djimasta Koibla, a man thought to be more pliable.

Deby had long preferred separate bilateral negotiations with the country's political and military organisations, but in July agreed to the principle of meeting a combined delegation.

At the same time, he has been indulging in some provocative behaviour. In June, secret police agents ransacked the premises of the N'Djamena Hebdo, one of French-speaking Africa's better-known newspapers, roughing up its editorial director and editor. The president later banned a protest march organised by most of the opposition parties. And on August 30, Kebzaboh's home was searched. In a telephone conversation with Le Monde, Kebzaboh said he was sure it had been an attempt to assassinate him. He recalled that Abbas Kotty, a political opponent from the north, had been assassinated in March 1993 by Deby's republican guard.

The government accuses Kebzaboh of having contacts with armed groups, such as the Movement for Democracy and Development (MDD) which is close to former president Habré, now living in exile in Senegal. Apart from the contacts between Kebzaboh and the MDD, the southern leader Laokein Bardé's Armed Forces for a Federal Republic recently moved closer to Frolinat, led by another former president, Goukouni Oueddei.

GIVEN THE lack of progress towards democracy, politicians are tempted to crank up the military pressure. For the moment, it is only threats. The southern provinces of Logone and Moyen Chari are often subject to guerrilla activities difficult to distinguish from banditry. The north is the scene of often bloody factional clashes as a result of power being monopolised by the president's clan, the Zaghawas.

The violence has not reached the levels of the 1970s, yet the risks are there. After five years of restructuring under French auspices, the Chadian army is still extraordinarily vulnerable. Soldiers are not paid and only the republican guard, where the Zaghawas are in a majority, remains a credible deterrence. But the violence it has been engaged in, especially in the south, has earned it the people's hatred.

Apart from its military co-operation mission, France maintains 800 troops left over from the 1986 Operation Sparrowhawk, which was mounted when Libya appeared to threaten Chad's territorial integrity. But Paris is beginning to lose patience with a president who is using this commitment as a cover while he is increasingly intent on provoking the people.

France would like to see Deby step down quietly from office, "like André Kolingba in Central Africa", said a French official. But N'Djamena is not Bangui, and the large number of weapons around as well as the Chadian people's warring traditions make the situation explosive. Paris finds Oueddei a much more acceptable candidate than he was in the days when he backed Libyan designs on Chad.

But Oueddei, who lives in Algiers, has a long way to go. First he has to overcome his revulsion for his long-time rival, Habré. Then he must persuade the political parties to negotiate on the basis of government programmes rather than power-sharing. And that is a tall order.

(September 13)

Chirac widens the gap with Antipodeans

EDITORIAL

RARELY have France and the South Pacific region, poles apart geographically, been so politically alienated. And the nuclear tests are to blame. Paris and Canberra now seem to be separated by an abyss of incomprehension in which ignorance, prejudice or even malice are mingled.

Jacques Chirac's indictment of Australia and New Zealand, which he accuses of planning to drive France out of the South Pacific, can only increase the tension. By voicing suspicion that our distant "partners" in the Pacific are harbouring sinister designs, the president may have thought he was striking a Gaullist posture. But the overriding impression is that he is trying to play upon the nationalist feelings of the French people who for the most part oppose the resumption of nuclear tests. By berating Australians and New Zealanders, he only strengthens the image they have of him as an arrogant, disdainful president.

Worse, by putting the indignation and anger down to an alleged desire to drive France out, Chirac lends credence to a simplistic analysis of a political and psychological situation his own decision has created. The generally anti-French reactions in Australia stem in part from internal concerns and cloak attitudes far more complex than they appear at first sight.

It is only because it is being goaded by the opposition that the Labour government in Canberra has hurriedly taken a tougher line. While some Australian newspapers have espoused the worst xenophobic excesses, a part of public opinion has distinguished between Chirac's decision and the French people's feelings. The cautious strategy New Zealand has adopted — opting to take its grievance to the International Court of Justice at The Hague — largely discredits the president's over-hasty bracketing together of the two countries in his condemnation.

Ultimately, the president's outburst looks very much like a diversionary ploy. He knows quite well that Australia and New Zealand are not asking for France's departure from the Pacific.

With its concern to become better integrated in its zone — and this goes hand in hand with its economic interests — Australia likes to think of itself as spokesman for the region. It is all the more obliged to take the lead in the protests against the tests as denuclearisation of the Pacific has for many years been one of its people's deepest wishes. This is what Chirac refuses to understand, be it out of conviction or self-interest.

(September 13)

Museveni champions 'no party' rule

The Ugandan president believes his successes and western support will keep the opposition muzzled. **Jean Hélène** reports from Kampala

NINE years after becoming president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni will stand the test of a presidential election in December. Often described as central and eastern Africa's strongman, Museveni cannot shake off his nervousness. Last month, for example, a public gathering due to be held in the Palissa municipality to raise funds for a charity was banned by the police on "security grounds".

The organisers are sure the meeting was banned because Paul K Ssemogerere, the second deputy prime minister who has resigned and is now a presidential candidate, was expected to be present. Ssemogerere points out that Milton Obote's regime, which was every bit as bad as Idi Amin's dictatorship when it came to political repression, also banned a meeting of his Democratic Party on the grounds that it would cause "security problems".

When he gained power in January 1986, Museveni founded the National Resistance Movement (NRM), banned political parties and the right to form associations, and created what he called the "no-party system". The NRM is supposed to represent all the political tendencies in the country.

However, the government's base is gradually shrinking, with supporters of a multi-party system dropped every time there is a cabinet reshuffle. After 18 months of debates, the constituent assembly came out last month in favour of keeping the "no-party system" until 2000 and coupled the return to a multi-party system with a referendum to be held in 1998.

With the triumph of the "movementists" over the "partyists", the regime has, once and for all, alienated the support of opponents who agreed to the experiment of a national union government. "It's now clear that Museveni is imposing de facto one-party rule on us," said Ssemogerere as an explanation for leaving the government.

Every opposition candidate will conduct his own election campaign and without resources, while Museveni has the state machinery at his service. For the last two months, he has been going up and down the country addressing crowds, but he assures them: "I'm not conducting an election campaign."

Museveni's nervousness would appear to spring principally from the attitude of the Bagandas (subjects of one of the kingdoms that formed colonial Uganda). They make up more than 20 per cent of the population and are sparing in their support for him. Discontent is spreading among the Bagandas who fought against Obote's "northern" regime in Museveni's National Resistance Army alongside the Ankoles (Museveni's own tribe) and exiled Rwandan Tutsis who today hold power in Kigali.

"Our struggle and our sufferings have been poorly rewarded," say the Bagandas. They are waiting for Museveni to keep the promise he is said to have given in 1981 to restore the monarchy, abolished in 1966, in return for their support for his rebellion. They also criticise him for paying more attention to developing his native region than the rest of the country.

The Bagandas want a federal system set up to allow their king to assume political and financial powers. But the regime has not given in to this. However, it authorised the crowning of the kabaka, Muteba II, in July 1993 and expressed the hope that the Bugandan kingdom would remain as a cultural entity.

MUSEVENI'S fate in the coming election hangs on the Baganda vote. Although he can count on support from his own Ankole region in the west, the north is still the stronghold of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC), and in the east only half the constituencies would apparently vote for him. "Ssemogegere is a respected politician. He is also of Bagandan origin and a dangerous rival," said a western diplomat, "especially if he obtains the UPC northerners' support."

All the same, Museveni can point to an impressive record. Political stability after 15 years of chaos under the bloody regimes of Amin and Obote, and the return to a measure of law and order with the help of an army more disciplined than in the past, account for Museveni's popularity in rural areas.

Kampala is becoming more pleasant to live in, turning once again into the capital of the former "pearl of Africa": public buildings, private houses and hotels have all been renovated. And while the city's residents have not lost their habit of hurrying home early in the evening, insecurity no longer prevents them going out for strolls after dark now that more and more streets are well lit. But the benefits of the 10 per cent economic growth registered last year have not trickled down to everybody, and Museveni is fighting the election on the issue of poverty.



Uneasy peace: a nervous Museveni is already addressing crowds all over the country PHOTOGRAPH: PIERS CAVENDISH

Perceived as a model African state, Uganda has the support of the United States which has made it the centrepiece of its strategy against Khartoum's Islamic regime. This gives Kampala's strongman plenty of elbowroom before he is dropped by western countries and international financial institutions that are not impressed by his ambitions.

The concerns voiced by countries and institutions bankrolling Uganda suggest they might be ready to go along with some measure of election rigging to allow Museveni to hold on to power. There is no doubt, however, that if the champions of pluralism and the federalists are defeated it would provoke a great deal of resentment.

So far there are no signs of discontent developing into open rebellion, but a Ugandan army major of Bagandan origin, Herbert Itongwa, recently deserted and formed the Democratic National Army. Last month, police arrested six of his followers at Luwero, in the heart of Buganda, the very place from where in 1981 Museveni and 27 of his followers gave the signal for the start of his guerrilla campaign.

(September 9)

Paris 'planned virus attack on activists'

Bertrand Le Gendre on an unknown episode in French intelligence's struggle with Greenpeace

TEN years ago, after French agents sank the Rainbow Warrior in Auckland harbour, they were ordered to prevent the environmental movement's other vessel, Greenpeace, from interfering with the nuclear test campaign then under way at Mururoa. Many options were hastily considered but the least risky was finally adopted — sabotaging the vessel's communications facilities, a major asset in the media battle raging off the atoll.

The incident had been a closely guarded secret, but now a source close to the French foreign intelligence agency (DGSE) has revealed how it outwitted Greenpeace.

It happened in September 1985 at Curaçao in the Dutch West Indies. Arriving from Amsterdam to replace the Rainbow Warrior, the Greenpeace vessel was preparing to be fitted out for sailing to Mururoa. In Paris, there was panic. A steady steam of information was being leaked into newspapers about the sabotage of the Rainbow Warrior, and it was causing an international outcry

The government feared the fallout from direct coverage of the environmental activists' movements off the Polynesian test site. A team of photographers from the Gamma agency was aboard the Greenpeace ship, which had signed agreements with television networks all over the world to provide them with pictures and video-tapes. The order sent to the DGSE station chief in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, was: "Detain the Greenpeace vessel at Curaçao by every possible means." By chance, the DGSE had an unpaid agent on the spot, a Frenchwoman who had been living in Curaçao for years.

The station chief went to Curaçao to see what could be done. Using the services of helpful contacts in the local administration, he found that it would be possible to require the crew members to be vaccinated on the pretext that it was a new health regulation. They could then be injected with a virus that would cause violent diarrhoea or yellow fever, thus delaying the ship's departure.

But the idea did not excite the French agents who dreamt it up. It looked too much like the methods that turned the Auckland mission into a fiasco. It was, nevertheless, submitted to their headquarters in Paris, which rejected it.

Finally, the DGSE plumped for the simplest solution. In return for a case of whisky, a government employee in Curaçao agreed to delay customs clearance of the transmission equipment due to be installed on the ship long enough to photocopy the documents about the planned frequencies and note the nature of the equipment.

A French agent picked up the photocopies from the employee and immediately sent them on to Paris. With the help of this information France had no trouble jamming Gamma television transmissions from the Greenpeace vessel.

This accounts for the mysterious communications problems that plagued the ecologists' undertaking.

(September 12)

Terrorism by Jewish settlers alarms Israel

Patrice Claude in Jerusalem

AN INCREASE in violent acts committed by extreme rightwing Israelis opposed to even a partial return of the occupied territories to the Palestinians has prompted the government to sound a warning.

The immigration absorption minister, Yair Tsaban, announced this week that a "policy of firmness" was going to be adopted. This would be a sharp change from the relatively soft approach the government appears to have been taking towards Jewish offenders breaching the peace.

The more fanatical Jewish settlers entrenched in and around the Palestinian community of Hebron, jittery at the possibility that Israeli troops currently deployed in the region may be reduced or pulled out altogether, again resorted to violence, attacking Arabs on September 10.

As a result, five Arab schoolchildren aged between eight and 10 had to be treated in hospital after being slightly injured by stones and bottles hurled at them by Jewish settlers attempting to tear down the Palestinian flag flying on their school's roof.

The day before, Salman Zamari, a 25-year-old Palestinian father of a newborn baby, was killed at his home in a northern suburb by a gang of Israelis wearing military uniforms.

The victim was not suspected of any crime and had no history of problems with Israeli security. Over the weekend, after the army announced that none of its units was operating in the vicinity at the time the crime was committed, a new extreme Jewish group called Eyal claimed that it had killed the man.

Consisting of militants of the anti-Arab Kach and Kahana-Hai movements that Israel banned in the spring of 1994, Eyal is well established in the Kiryat Arba Jewish settlement next-door to Hebron.

But it subsequently denied taking part in the killing. Later, another underground group, The Sword of David, also spawned by the same organisation, claimed that it had killed Zamari.

Concerned by the possibility of a resurgence of underground movements of the kind that carried out a number of violent attacks on prominent Palestinians in the 1980s, the government has ordered a "thorough investigation" into the incident.

"If it turns out this murder was the work of Jews," said the prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, "they should know they are only serving the Palestinians' interests, for the latter could now demand that we allow them to deploy large numbers of their police in Hebron and the surrounding region to protect their people."

(September 12)

Paris reaps Algeria's bitter harvest

The conflict in its former colony has made France a target of both local and foreign Islamists, writes **Georges Marion**

A SENIOR French civil servant remembers feeling, after a discussion with his opposite number in Algiers two years ago, that France was going to be affected by the civil war that was beginning to rock Algeria. Today his worst fears have come true: after first attacking French nationals in Algeria, Islamic fundamentalists are now beginning to treat France as though it were a party to that conflict.

The explosion at Saint-Michel metro station in Paris on July 25 was the first of a series of actual or attempted bomb attacks on French soil. The various French security services that deal with terrorist threats have had time to take thorough stock of the situation, and they are now almost certain that several other attacks are on the cards.

After the hijacking of an Air France Airbus in December 1994, which resulted in the death of the four terrorists involved, the security services were expecting the fundamentalists to retaliate in some way. A senior security source says: "The Islamists promised they would avenge the blood of their martyrs. That is precisely what they have done. They believe in what they do, and do what they say they will do — it's as simple as that."



Another source says: "Many people in France were happy to see the hijackers die. But did anyone try to gauge the bitterness of young North Africans living on suburban housing estates who, whether they were themselves Islamists or not, immediately identified with the young Algerians who had dared to defy the French state?"

It seems that under the influence of Islamist propaganda some suburban immigrant communities are beginning to supply fresh troops who are prepared to go into action. Most people working in counter-terrorism are now convinced that the perpetrators of the most recent attacks are not fundamentalist commandos sent from Algiers, but young Algerians or Muslims of French nationality who were born, or who settled, in France a long time ago.

Caught up in a chaotic historical context, and faced with a daily situation which has turned them into social outcasts with absolutely no prospects of employment or social advancement, these disorientated "new terrorists", who are believed to number only a few hundred, have apparently given vent to their deep sense of bitterness by planting bombs and espousing the most radical Islamist ideology.

No responsibility has been claimed for the latest attacks. This runs against the convention that any terrorist attack organised by a political group or a state makes a demand which then serves as the basis for negotiations.

Responsibility for the Saint-Michel blast and the subsequent bomb in a litter bin near the Arc de Triomphe was claimed by a hitherto unknown "General Command" of the Armed Islamic Groups (GIA). But investigators think hoaxers were at work, as no precise claim or demand was made.

However, specialists argue that the Saint-Michel bomb, which paved the way for the others, was different in that the methods used were those of well-trained, professional Islamist militants — or those of Algerian secret agents who wanted to nip in the bud any temptation the French government may have to negotiate with the "religious maniacs".

PRESIDENT Jacques Chirac recently admitted in private that he, too, distinguished two types of attack: the first, consisting of the murder of Imam Sahraoui in a Paris mosque on July 11 and the Saint-Michel bomb, was the GIA's revenge for the death of those who attacked the Airbus; the second, clearly of deep concern to the president, involves the manipulation of delinquents or radicalised French Muslims.

Significantly, however, almost all senior French security officers refuse to rule out the possibility that the Algerian government, even though it is officially France's ally, may have been involved. They are often scathing about their Algerian counterparts, whom they describe as unscrupulous individuals without any political vision, prepared to stop at nothing to save their skins and defend their privileges.

Their determination has paid off. "A year ago we didn't give the Algerian military much of a chance," says one senior French official. "We thought they were a spineless lot who would quickly be defeated by the Islamists. We now have to admit we were wrong: the army has not disintegrated, and the regime has succeeded in holding on to the big cities, while the Islamists control large chunks of territory.

"The government's repressive action has been appalling, spawning new guerrillas every day, but there is now a balance of power between the two camps. One has the feeling it could go on for ever."

That prospect is all the more frightening because the continuation of the war in Algeria can only cause trouble in France and trigger further attacks. So far, French policy has remained fairly indecisive. Should France resolutely defend the established regime in Algeria, as Charles Pasqua advocated when he was interior minister, and turn a blind eye to its less savoury aspects?

Or would it be a better idea, as the prime minister, Alain Juppé, seems to have concluded, to keep several irons in the fire so as to be able to encourage a political compromise that can bring the two sworn enemies to the negotiating table?

The issue has only just begun to be debated and is far from being resolved. But the current wave of attacks is likely to force all the parties to make their positions clear.

(September 12)

The National Front's odd man out

Philippe Broussard on the mysterious death of an unconventional rightwing politician

JEAN-CLAUDE Poulet-Dachary, chief adviser to the mayor of Toulon, the Mediterranean port won by the far-right National Front (FN) at June's local elections, had two nicknames. Friends called him "Poulet" (chicken), while his enemies preferred the term "Poulette" (chick). It was an important distinction in a party that takes a dim view of those who deviate from the "norm". His private life was the subject of much gossip among a restricted circle of local politicians.

At dawn on August 29, councillor Poulet-Dachary was found dead at the bottom of the stairs of the modest apartment block where he lived. His body bore two injuries, one obviously caused by his fall, the other — to the head — apparently inexplicable. His wallet had not been stolen, and his briefcase had been left on the stairs. When the police mentioned the possibility of murder, the press seized on the "gay lead". Soon the whole town was talking about the councillor who preferred men.

Poulet-Dachary was certainly a strange bird. Born in 1949, he was brought up mostly by an aunt in Compiègne, who sent him to a Catholic school. His divorced parents travelled a great deal. His mother, Andrée-Olga Dachary, sang at the Opéra-Comique, while his father, Manuel-Claude Poulet, produced a popular radio programme. The Poulet family were musical: grandfather Gaston Poulet conducted the Bordeaux Orchestra for a time and was a friend of Debussy, and grandmother Jane Evrard was also a conductor.

Jean-Claude Poulet (he had not yet tagged his mother's name on to his father's) left Compiègne in 1964, passed his *baccalauréat* in Paris and prepared for his degree. He espoused the far-right ideology of Charles Maurras and joined Action Française, but did not immediately get involved in politics. In 1970, he entered the seminary of the traditionalist Monsignor Marcel Lefèvre at Ecône in Switzerland. He wore a cassock. Paris friends called him "Monsieur l'Abbé". Some sources say he was expelled from the seminary because of a relationship with another man, who mentioned the fact in confession.

Poulet-Dachary left the seminary and joined the Foreign Legion in 1975. True to its traditions, the Legion did not ask him why he wanted to join. Patrice Mourichon, deputy mayor of Toulon, who went to the same school as Poulet-Dachary, says he was a mystic who was searching for the truth, and for whom the Legion was a logical follow-on from the seminary. He also thinks his sudden military calling was the result of a "serious disappointment as regards his religious faith".

He stayed for 15 years in the administrative department of the Legion, rising to the rank of warrant officer in 1986, and spent time in Mururoa and Mayotte. On his return to the Legion's base in Aubagne, he worked on the monthly house journal, Képi Blanc.

Contrary to what the FN leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, claimed at his funeral, Poulet-Dachary never distinguished himself "on the battlefield". He was reportedly kept in administration "because he was intelligent".

When he left the Legion in 1990 (according to some sources he was thrown out for sexual misconduct, which included prancing through the streets of Marseilles in flimsy women's clothing), Poulet-Dachary settled in Marseilles. It was there that he apparently met Jean-Marie Le Chevallier, the leading FN figure who is now mayor of Toulon. He became his chief adviser, travelling each day to Toulon by train. He was regarded as a hard worker, but rumours began to circulate that were not much to the liking of a party which puts great emphasis on "moral values".

Local FN cadres became alarmed at his high jinks in gay bars in the seedier district of town. Several young FN militants complained he had "propositioned" them. To friends, "Poulet" remained an intelligent and cultured man, a practising Catholic, a member of the local choir, and a fan of Gregorian chant, opera and the cinema.

But to his enemies "Poulette" was an authoritarian misogynist with a marked taste for booze and the wrong kind of sex. It was rumoured that after an evening out drinking he was seen making a fascist salute on Boulevard de Strasbourg.

The Var *département* federation of the FN came dangerously close to a split over the issue. But Poulet-Dachary's star continued to rise under the aegis of Le Chevallier. He became editor of Le Patriote du Var, the federation's magazine.

But the campaign against him continued. In January 1995 Le Pen met a delegation of FN dissidents, who told him that several young militants had been "approached". Le Pen asked a FN veteran, Dr Bernard Lefèvre, to collect evidence and produce a report on Poulet-Dachary and Le Chevallier (who was suspected of once having deserted from the French army). Le Pen came out in favour of the two men. The dissidents, whose evidence was apparently full of "spicy details", felt unrepresented. The local party split straight down the middle into pro- and anti-Poulet-Dachary camps.

The far-right daily Présent has persistently attacked the "jackals of cosmopolitan France", who peddle

To his enemies Poulet-Dachary was an authoritarian misogynist with a taste for booze and the wrong kind of sex

"abominable rumours" about Poulet-Dachary. Rumours they may be, but police have shown a close interest in the local gay community. "He loved Toulon and was liked by everyone — except those who were jealous of him," says Alain Tiberi, owner of the L'Olympe bar and a gay discothèque, the Boy's Paradise, sometimes visited by Poulet-Dachary.

Investigators are following two main leads. The first is that Poulet-Dachary was killed by somebody he had met casually. The second is that the motive was political and involved individuals either outside or within the FN. Le Pen was quick to rule out any homosexual motivation, which would be bad for the party's image. But he did say: "I admit there must be homosexuals in the FN, but there aren't any queens — they are invited to go elsewhere."

Like Le Chevallier, Le Pen has suggested the motive was political — which is possible in a *département* like the Var, which has been rocked by several major politico-financial scandals in recent years, not to mention the murder of the deputy Yann Piat in 1994.

The police are also looking at one other, and much more simple, hypothesis: that of an accident. When he died, Poulet-Dachary had 1.28g of alcohol in his blood. He may have fallen accidentally: the stairs are narrow and their banisters only 40 centimetres high.

Meanwhile, the Toulon air is thick with rumours, not only about Poulet-Dachary but about the sex lives of other local luminaries, both male and female.

Poulet-Dachary, however, certainly knew how to deal with innuendo in an extravagant style. Once, accused of homosexuality by a FN militant who had been talking to a retired Foreign Legion colonel, he denounced such "tittle-tattle" and wrote back: "We must have this out as soon as possible. I'll have you know that I'm not the sort of person who takes scurrilous attacks lying down.

"If necessary, we shall settle the matter like men of honour, by fighting a duel in the presence of witnesses. I shall have the choice of weapons, as I am the offended party. In that case, I promise you I shall fight to the death."

(September 8)

Internal exile in the new Germany

Günter Grass's treatment of reunification in his new novel has hit a raw nerve, writes **Lucas Delattre**

THE publication by Steidl Verlag of Günter Grass's latest novel, Ein Weites Feld (A Wide Field), has triggered off an unusually fierce barrage of attacks on the author. In a typical exchange, Grass retorted to a literary critic: "I don't need to be taught any lessons in democracy, especially not by former Stalinists." To which the answer was: "Your conception of literary criticism reminds me of Goebbels's."

The central character of the book, the German writer Theodor Fontane (1819-98), is reincarnated as Theodor Wuttke, a low-ranking civil servant in present-day Germany who, like his real-life counterpart, is nicknamed Fonty. He works for the Treuhandanstalt, the agency in charge of privatising former East German state enterprises, which occupies the building in Berlin that was once the headquarters of Hitler's air ministry.

Through his portrayal of Fonty and his policeman friend Hoftaller (who is a Stasi spy), Grass offers an extremely pessimistic view of German reunification, which he likens to a "colonisation" of the East by the West (he even uses the term "*Anschluss*") and sees as a rerun of German history.

"I've always said so: in theory, nothing changes," Fonty says in the final pages of the book.

Grass compares the reunification of 1990 with that of 1871, which carried within it the seeds of the first world war and the disaster that came in its wake. History, symbolised in the novel by a paternoster lift (a loop of continuously moving compartments still found in some German government buildings), seems to have forced Germany to regard Auschwitz as an inevitable part of its destiny.

The book implies that there are two German states, which are at once congenial and old-fashioned, but which have a single culture. Finally, in a cry of despair, Grass gets Fonty to say: "Quick, let's get out of this country, where for ever and ever Weimar will stand alongside Buchenwald and where nothing belongs to me any more."

The book was heralded as "the great novel of unification", a "monument" on a par with the great works of 19th century German literature. "The maestro is back" ran the headline of one weekly last spring.

When the publishers decided on an initial print run of 100,000 copies and a publication date (August 28) that coincided with Goethe's birthday, they thought they had a new Tin Drum on their hands — and perhaps a book that might net Grass a Nobel Prize for Literature.

But instead of the enthusiastic reception its publishers had hoped for, Ein Weites Feld was shot down in flames. Grass has been accused of every crime, including no longer possessing any talent as a writer and indulging in wordy passages.

But, more importantly, Grass also finds himself at the centre of a political storm raging in Germany. When his book came out, the conservative daily Die Welt ran the headline, "A 784-page novel against unification".

Why has Grass become the target of such vicious attacks? In Ein Weites Feld, the fall of the Berlin Wall is observed through the window of a McDonald's restaurant, where the novel's two main characters are eating hamburgers.

Grass describes the East German communist regime as a "very convenient dictatorship", echoing Fontane's description of the Prussian state. The Stasi is not very different from secret services in western democracies. To judge from Hoftaller's friendly and considerate attitude, the Stasi would even seem to be almost human.

"Günter Grass does not love his country," shrilled the Springer group's tabloid, Bild Zeitung (circulation: 4 million). Old reflexes have emerged from deep in the collective unconscious: a reader of the same paper accused Grass of being a *Nestbeschmutzer*, literally "a bird which soils its own nest"; in effect, a German who betrays his country.

Grass has also been accused of being soft on terrorism because he suggests it was "hardly surprising" that the previous head of the Treuhandanstalt, Detlev Rohwedder, should have been murdered by a Red Army Faction commando in 1991.

The much-feared "pope" of literary critics, Marcel Reich-Ranicki of the weekly Der Spiegel, has denounced not only the book's "lack of plot" and "shortage of living characters", but also Grass's "nostalgia" for a now defunct German Democratic Republic.

Unusually, it was Detlev Hensche, president of the print union, IG Medien, who was one of the first — and one of the few so far — to have stuck up for Grass in public. He claimed that the attacks on the novel were an attempt to "settle scores".

The writer Stefan Heym, who has been a communist member of the Bundestag since last year, even took it upon himself — "out of solidarity" — to offer Grass his support, despite the fact that the Social Democrat Grass has always been a fierce enemy of the Soviet system and of communist intellectuals in general.

As Freimut Duve, a Social Democrat deputy, has pointed out, "He was much more lucid than most of his compatriots about what the gulag and communist oppression was all about." And last year, Grass personally supported the Social Democrat candidate who was standing against Heym in Berlin.

The sad thing is that Grass, an erstwhile personal adviser to the late Chancellor Willy Brandt, seems to be completely out of touch with the times. There was a time when everything the militant Social Democrat Grass said had considerable political impact. Particularly memorable were his diatribes against the late conservative prime minister of Bavaria, Franz Josef Strauss.

The political pundit Wolfgang Bergsdorf, who is close to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, says: "In continuing to adopt the discourse of someone who always refuses everything, Günter Grass no longer strikes a chord in Germany."

Frank Schirrmacher, editor of the prestigious literary supplement of the daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, goes even further: "Grass has become a complete anachronism. He has not understood that Germany became a normal country at least as long ago as 1990."



Outsider . . . Grass embodies the provocative writer outlawed by bourgeois society PHOTOGRAPH: SYGMA

Most of Grass's old friends and admirers, even on the left, have begun to distance themselves from him. Norbert Seitz, editor of the magazine Die Neue Gesellschaft/Frankfurter Neue Hefte, feels it is no longer possible to say, as Grass does, that "it has become barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz".

Grass denies Germany the slightest ability to renew itself. "In setting himself up as a champion of the East German identity, which he believes should be protected against the ravages of West German capitalism, Grass can no longer see that

Grass likens German reunification to a 'colonisation' of the East by the West

there is a fundamental difference between a dictatorial regime and pluralistic and democratic western society," says Alexandra Wunsch, a Berlin political observer .

Paradoxically Grass, the leading writer of the German left, seems to agree, whether he likes it or not, with certain intellectuals who believe that Germany is doomed by its past, its geographical location and its particular brand of culture to play a role "apart".

Within the German left, Grass has always been one of the very few people who dared see his country in terms of "a civilisation" and above all "a nation". The latter word remains taboo, and Grass rightly fears it may become the monopoly of the intellectual right.

Surprisingly, no debate about essentials has been inspired by Ein Weites Feld. Germany no longer wants to listen to its leading writers. Günter Hofmann of the weekly Die Zeit deplores this: he believes the new republic would be better advised to listen to "a patriot of the constitution" (which is how Grass has always defined himself) rather than to Greenpeace militants.

Grass will continue to embody the committed and provocative writer who is outlawed by bourgeois society. It is an attitude that enables him to denounce the very real excesses of a contemporary German society obsessed with money and swamped by products of American culture.

Most German intellectuals tend not to get involved in the life of the community. That has never been true of Grass, who has always shown courage when required. It took courage to tear up his Social Democrat card in 1993, when the party backed a move by the Christian Democrats to tighten up legislation on immigration and political asylum.

With his Slav physique and slanting eyes, Grass has always been the target of the vilest form of persecution by his compatriots. Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, who has translated several of his books into French, says: "For a long time certain sections of the rightwing press called him 'the Asian', and he himself still carefully cultivates that iconoclastic image by wearing a Kirghiz-type moustache and unruly locks of hair."

The husky-voiced Grass will go on being a prophet of doom to those who are willing to listen to him. But his intellectual stance has shifted from that of a public orator fully in touch with the times to that of an internal exile, or a "crotchety uncle", in Lefebvre's phrase.

The author of Ein Weites Feld, taking advantage of his status as a leading figure of German literature, will continue to write. But the Germans will remain largely indifferent — while continuing to buy his books — because they are tired of being lectured to.

(September 7)

Autumn manoeuvres by the book

Josyane Savigneau previews the season of literary prizes in France

MANOEUVRING for France's autumn clutch of literary prizes has already begun. The rumour is that Grasset, the publishing house that controls all the panels of judges, wants to scoop up all the prizes. That is only logical, but it is getting to be a bore. And anyway it would be indecent if they made a clean sweep. So they will have to haggle with the other publishers. But will such negotiations this year be done, as usual, with Le Seuil and Gallimard (the three publishers make up a hallowed troika known as "Galligrasseuil")?

The done thing is to announce that the autumn's new novels are a dull lot, but that genuinely seems to be the case this year. However, we can thank the literary prizes, which are awarded by panels of judges who are elected for life (a very French speciality), for the fact that in France and nowhere else a novel makes the lead story on the lunchtime television news the day the winner of the Prix Goncourt is announced. The French truly love literature.

Why then is France the only country where the death of the novel is periodically announced? When you go abroad and people tell you that there has been no good French fiction since the sixties, ask them to name names. You will be given the titles of third-rate novels which won the Goncourt, Femina, Renaudot or Médicis prizes, and which were translated into foreign languages simply because they had landed a prize.

That is all very irritating but not serious, because books are able to hold their own against publishers more interested in their bank balance than their intellectual reputation, or critics determined to ignore them.

Nathalie Sarraute, one of the leading lights of the *nouveau roman*, was publishing books in the fifties, though they did not sell well or find favour with prize judges. This autumn, the 93-year-old Sarraute is still there, with a new book called Ici. It would be only right for her to win a prize in 1995.

I am also putting my money on some first novelists, such as Olivier Charneux, Claude Ponti and Daniel Picouly, and recommend Bernard Lamarche-Vadel, whose talent is confirmed by his second novel. Meanwhile, we can look forward to new works by three established writers, Hector Bianciotti, Philippe Sollers and J-M G Le Clézio. Not such a bad autumn crop after all.

(September 1)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Women of the World Make Common Cause

Steven Mufson in Beijing

GRAY-HAIRED Betty Friedan sat in a chair on the balcony of the conference hall during the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women, holding forth in her hoarse voice on the meaning of the meeting. As she spoke, a young woman from India handed me a camera and squeezed beside Friedan to pose for a photograph.

It was a snapshot of what has happened to the women's movement over 30 years.

Sitting in the gallery of an animated hall full of women, Friedan is no longer a lone voice of feminism talking about the "housewife syndrome." Though still an icon of the women's movement, now she is one of many voices in a movement that — judging from the varied delegates at the conference and the issues they debated — has become better organized, more international, more powerful, more diverse, more open about its problems and more assertive about women's rights.

In drawing up a declaration and program for action here, women lobbyists, women lawyers and (mostly) women politicians traded proposals, bargained over programs and talked about how the dense 150-page document could be used for action back home.

Gone are the days when women wanted to talk only of equal rights, child care and abortion. The conference here put new emphasis on issues such as bank credit and war crimes, literacy and inheritance rights, domestic violence and parliamentary representation, lesbian rights and human rights.

The conference brought together women from countries all around the globe who have led markedly different lives — women such as Mona Zulkifar, an Egyptian lawyer active in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); Patricia Licuanan, a Manila social psychologist and chair of the main committee; Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who gave an opening day speech; the delegates from Namibia, which was until recently a white-run South African colony; and Mary Ann Glendon, a Harvard Law School professor and the first woman to lead a delegation from the Vatican.

At times over the two weeks of meetings, the disparity in women's experiences created tensions. "I had a woman from New Guinea tell me, 'Don't you tell us how to live our lives,'" said one recent college graduate from the United States. In addition, she said, "there was tension between Americans who say our girls only get paid $100,000 and our boys make $140,000, and other women who say it'd be nice if our girls could go to school."

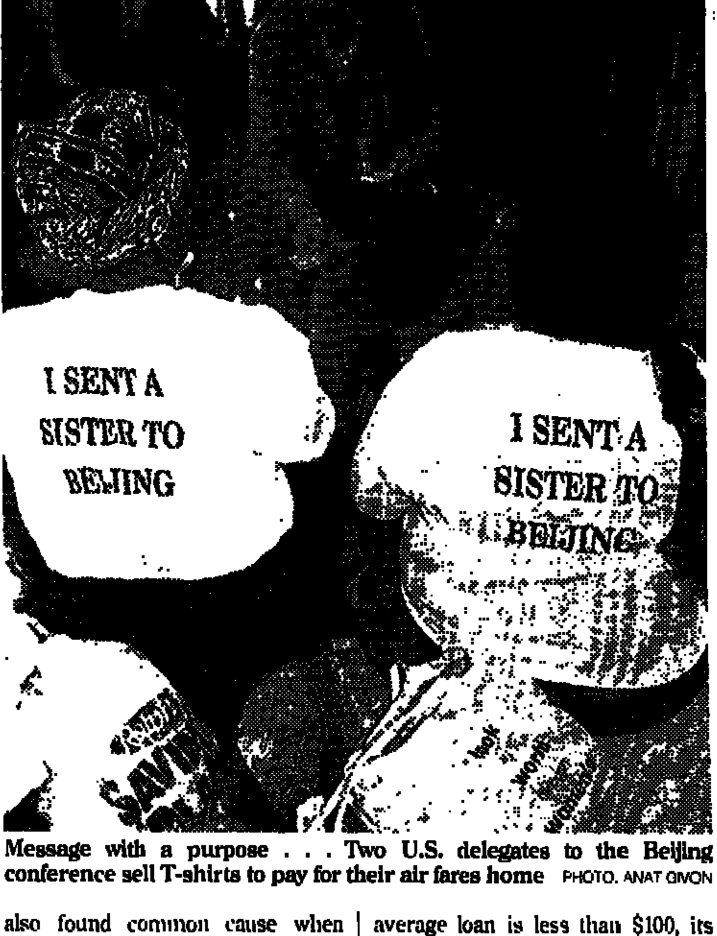
Other times, however, the Americans said that peering across the cultural divide was an inspiration. "Sometimes I'm a victim, sometimes I'm not a victim; but women in the Third World are all victims," said Bella Abzug, the former New York City congresswoman famous for her liberal politics and flamboyant hats. The things American women struggle for — help at home, nontraditional jobs — is "the icing on the cake" for people who do not have adequate housing or are illiterate, she said. "I have always received my greatest strength from the women of the developing countries. They fight against overwhelming odds."

Despite differences, many women here argued that there are threads that bind women together and point the world women's movement in some common directions as they struggle for equal rights.

Violence against women was barely mentioned at the last international conference on women, 10 years ago. This year, combating such violence was an issue that cut across cultural and geographic boundaries.

In Africa and the Middle East, more than 85 million girls and women have been genitally mutilated, a practice intended to extinguish sexual desire by removing the clitoris, thus causing pain and trauma and increasing various medical risks. According to one survey, more than 58 percent of Japanese women reported physical abuse by a partner. In India, police record thousands of "dowry deaths" each year in which young brides are killed by their husbands and in-laws because their families paid insufficient dowries. In the United States, about one-third of all women murdered die at the hands of a husband or boyfriend.

Women from around the globe also found common cause when addressing their economic situations. Not counting Queen Elizabeth II, the 388 billionaires around the world are all men and, combined, they possess greater wealth than 2.5 billion people, mostly women.



Message with a purpose . . . Two U.S. delegates to the Beijing conference sell T-shirts to pay for their air fares home PHOTO. ANAT GIVON

The solution, many women say, is "micro banking," modeled on the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh. By making small loans to poor women and groups of women who are mutually responsible for each other's loans, these banks achieve extremely low default rates and reasonable profits.

The technique has been applied across borders. The 10-year-old Foundation for International Community Assistance, for example, has $15 million of outstanding loans mostly in Central America. Its average loan is less than $100, its average borrower earns $2.15 a day, and 90 percent of borrowers are women. The foundation's repayment rates are an enviable 97 percent. Recently it started lending in poor areas around Washington, D.C.

Noting the shared concerns across a spectrum of issues, Abzug said conferences such as this one spur women to increasingly see their fates as intertwined.

"They used to give us a day; it was called International Women's Day," said Abzug, who has turned her attention to helping Third World women. "Then in 1975, they gave us a year. Then from 1975 to 1985 they declared it to be the Decade of Women. I said at the time, 'Who knows? Maybe they'll let us into the whole thing.'"

Japan Takes Step Toward Sexual Equality

Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan in Tokyo

TAXI DRIVER Michiko Niizeki lit up like Las Vegas. "Really?" she said, beaming. "That's great!"

Niizeki had just heard the news: The Japanese government plans to allow married couples to use different last names. Japanese law now requires married couples to take one last name — almost always the husband's — but that is set to change next year, based on government recommendations issued last week.

"I think this will make a tremendous contribution to women's status and independence," said Niizeki, 40, who said she doubted she'd change back to her maiden name but was clearly delighted by the notion that she soon could if she wanted.

Social norms in Japan change glacially, caught under the weight of thousands of years of tradition. The government is usually the last to shift. In recent years, a growing number of Japanese women have been using their maiden names — while technically following the law by registering their marriage under their husband's name.

But tradition dies hard in Japan, and it has many friends. In Tokyo's dense Ginza district, Takeshi Usami, 46, and Osamu Toyoda, 47, who work in the sales division of a machine company, were not at all happy about the news.

"The image and the identity of family is symbolized by having the same name," Usami said.

The status of women in Japan is a matter of much debate. According to the prime minister's office, the number of women holding positions in political, administrative, judicial and other key areas has nearly doubled in the past decade. In the Diet, or parliament, for example, female membership rose from 3.6 percent in 1984 to 6.8 percent in 1995.

But a report released this month at the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing noted that the ratio was the lowest among the 25 most advanced nations of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Women make up 10.3 percent of the U.S. Congress.

It was also the subject of some public scorn that the Japanese delegation to the Women's Conference was led by a man, chief cabinet secretary Koken Nosaka. The Japanese government wanted the delegation to be led by a cabinet minister; all 21 are men.

"Although Japan is said to be an economic superpower, it is far from being a society where equality between men and women is observed," the Asahi Shimbun newspaper said in an editorial this month. It noted that less than 1 percent of management positions in central government were held by women, and said that female college students entering the work force still faced discrimination in wages and employment.

Although the number of women in the work force has greatly increased in recent years, many of those jobs are part-time positions or low-paying jobs. And now that economic times have turned sour, women are often the first to be let go.

The traditional structure of working husbands and stay-at-home wives still predominates. In fact, a common Japanese word for "my wife" translates as "in the house." But with last week's recommendations, many women feel that they have taken another small step forward.

Rogue CIA Agent Held In Havana

Douglas Farah in Havana

CONVICTED arms trafficker and former CIA agent Frank Terpil, one of the most notorious fugitives from U.S. justice, is under house arrest in Havana pending investigation by Cuban authorities of his business practices on the island, sources said.

The Brooklyn-born Terpil fled the United States in September 1980 in the face of charges that he sold 10,000 automatic weapons to undercover police agents. He was convicted *in absentia* the following year in a New York state court and sentenced to 53 years in prison. Terpil was also charged in federal court with training terrorists in Libya. He allegedly collaborated with another renegade CIA agent, Edwin P. Wilson, to sell millions of dollars' worth of weapons and explosives to Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

Terpil's detention took place about three weeks ago, according to Canadian businessmen and other sources. The Cuban government has made no public statement about the arrest.

U.S. officials said Cuban authorities had not informed them of Terpil's detention and added that it was unlikely he would be extradited to the United States.

Terpil, 56, is the second major American fugitive to be detained by Cuban authorities in four months. In May, fugitive financier Robert Vesco was arrested on charges of attempting to swindle the government of President Fidel Castro. Unlike Terpil, who is only under house arrest and investigation, Vesco was formally charged and is being held in a high-security prison.

"Terpil is detained, under house arrest, and there is an ongoing investigation into his activities — specifically, his misdealings with Canadian businessmen," one knowledgeable source said.

Three uniformed officers of the Interior Ministry, Cuba's internal security force, could be seen at Terpil's single-story house in a run-down residential area about 30 miles east of the capital. A motorcycle of the Interior Ministry was parked in front. Terpil, a low-level courier and communications expert with the CIA from 1965 to 1972, worked in Pakistan and the Middle East. He was fired in part because his superiors could not tolerate his indiscriminate boasting.

His collaboration with Wilson, a former CIA undercover agent, occurred in the late 1970s. Both were convicted of selling thousands of pounds of C-4 malleable plastic explosives to Gadhafi. In a 1981 interview, Terpil also admitted selling explosives, timers and night-vision surveillance systems worth millions of dollars and providing terrorist training.

In 1978, he sold about $3.2 million in weapons, explosives and surveillance equipment and torture devices to dictator Idi Amin's bloody regime in Uganda, according to a Washington Post report. A New York federal grand jury indicted Terpil in 1981 on six charges of conspiring to deliver the goods to Uganda.

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Swiss Banks Unlock Secrets of War

William Drozdiak in Paris

LEADING Swiss banks announced last week they had discovered $34 million in dormant accounts that may belong to Holocaust victims and that they will help Jewish survivors and their heirs track down lost assets.

Lifting the veil of secrecy on one of the most controversial legacies of the war, the Swiss Bankers' Association said a partial survey of a dozen major banks that conducted most of the country's financial business in 1945 revealed nearly 900 abandoned accounts containing funds that may have been deposited by Jews and others who were persecuted and killed by the Nazis.

But the World Jewish Congress and other agencies acting on behalf of Holocaust victims say the forsaken deposits represent only a fraction of the wealth of Jewish Nazi victims. Far larger assets, estimated by some experts to be worth several billion dollars, were confiscated from Jewish victims in Eastern Europe and may have been stashed by the Nazis in Swiss accounts or safe deposit boxes.

Nazi SS leader Heinrich Himmler, for example, is believed to have dispatched a hoard of paintings, jewelry and money stolen from Hungarian Jews to Switzerland toward the end of the war. New information on "Himmler's Treasure" and other Nazi booty taken from East European Jews has come to light from the archives of East German and other Communist secret services since the collapse of the Soviet empire six years ago.

Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, will appeal for greater cooperation in determining the fate of wartime Jewish assets when he meets with Swiss President Kaspar Villiger and Swiss banking leaders. Bronfman, who also heads the World Jewish Restitution Organization, has been authorized by the Israeli government to negotiate on its behalf with the Swiss government and bankers.

To streamline searches for abandoned accounts, Swiss banks next year will open a Central Contact Office, headed by the banking association's ombudsman, that will assist the heirs of Holocaust victims in tracking down lost family assets. The decision came after a rising tide of criticism that contends the banks are hiding behind the country's statute of limitations and vaunted secrecy laws to keep the wealth of Nazi victims. Last week's announcement said the 10-year statute of limitations on dormant accounts will not apply to the wartime accounts.

In the first seven years after the war, Switzerland returned about $13 million worth of assets of Holocaust victims to rightful heirs. During the 1960s, the Swiss legislature passed a law ordering a review of unclaimed bank holdings from the Nazi era that turned up less than $8 million, which was awarded to charity. Since then, relatives of Nazi victims looking for lost deposits have been asked to pay fees ranging from $80 to $800 for account searches that have almost invariably turned up nothing.

Some funds that came to Switzerland from Jews during the war were smuggled out of Nazi-held territory at the risk of the death penalty. The money was often deposited by an intermediary in a secret numbered account, an attempt to avoid German detection that later would complicate the quest by survivors or heirs of genocide victims to retrieve family assets.

In addition, the tight secrecy surrounding Swiss banking laws and the voluminous documentation required for payments and withdrawals made it practically impossible for claimants to take possession of the deposits, since most had only the flimsiest evidence to establish their rights.

THE controversy over the lost accounts grew out of a rising public demand in Switzerland this year during 50th anniversary observances of the end of the war for an investigation of connections between the banks and the Nazi rape of Europe.

This year, the Swiss government for the first time formally apologized for its treatment of emigrant Jews during the war, many of whom were denied entry to neutral Switzerland and sent back to Germany to face almost certain death at the hands of their Nazi persecutors.

Moreover, the rise of democratic governments in Eastern Europe has produced a torrent of fresh claims from citizens in those countries who were unable to pursue the lost property of their relatives during the decades of Communist rule.

Israel Singer, general secretary of the World Jewish Congress, said in a telephone interview that the collapse of communism had produced a flood of new information and opened a new chapter in redressing the claims of Jewish wartime victims.

"This is just the beginning; we are finally getting the documents that can help track down the real, communal and cultural properties of Holocaust victims in a part of Europe that was closed for a long time," he said.

"We welcome the move by Swiss banks, and we expect them to be as forthcoming as possible in determining the rightful owners of dormant accounts and all forms of property by the Nazis." Besides Switzerland, Singer said the newly democratic governments of 15 East European countries have promised full cooperation in determining how the families of Jews persecuted in their lands should be compensated for lost or stolen property.

"These are young, new democracies, and they are trying to do the right thing," Singer said. "We certainly don't want to bankrupt them, but we also want proper restitution to be made to the families of Jewish victims."

Powell Mania Gathers Force

COMMENT
Lou Cannon

WHILE researching a magazine article on Colin Powell several years ago, I attempted to find someone who had served with him in the Army who might say a critical word about the widely esteemed general.

If such persons exist, I never found them. Powell's superiors, subordinates and peers agreed that he was a splendid soldier and fine man. The article ended up as more of a puff piece than the balanced article I wanted to write.

Seven years later, Powell puffery is all the rage. Without declaring his candidacy or partisan affiliation, Powell has become a fixture on magazine covers and the principal X factor of the 1996 presidential elections. Powell mania got a further boost last week when he began a book-signing tour for his memoir, "My American Journey," that will give thousands a firsthand look at this remarkable man.

Powell is easy to like. He is smart and tough and a straight-talker who exudes patriotism, decency and black pride. As the first inner-city president, he would bring a fresh look to urban issues and race relations, currently in a crisis state.

What does he stand for? Powell skeptics sometimes say he is a mystery man who has avoided taking stands on divisive social issues. They claim his popularity would decline if he becomes an avowed candidate and forced to take positions on every issue under the sun.

Maybe so. Similar opinions were offered in 1952 about Dwight Eisenhower, the World War II hero to whom Powell is often compared. But people liked Ike and elected him president because of his character and because he projected a needed image of national purpose at a time when Americans were increasingly repelled by the narrow claims of partisanship.

Powell may not be Eisenhower's equivalent as a war hero, but people are even more disgusted with partisan politicians than in Ike's day. And Powell's views are much better known than Eisenhower's were and not at all mysterious: He is a centrist with conservative fiscal and foreign policy opinions who also appreciates the value of affirmative action and the role of government.

It is his sensible centrism that makes a Powell candidacy so problematical. The nominating system in the Republican Party is dominated by a rule-or-ruin right wing. It favors ideologues or the disappointing alternative of weather-vane politicians who will say what is necessary to be nominated.

Moderates who survive this process are likely to be damaged goods. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and California Governor Pete Wilson, to name the most likely suspects, have ruined their moderate reputations by jumping through hoops to appease the radical right on issues such as affirmative action.

A low point was reached when Dole returned a campaign contribution that his aides had solicited from a GOP homosexual organization. It was demeaning to the donors and must have been embarrassing for Dole, an honorable man who never before had pandered to homophobic sentiments.

Powell detests such pandering. While he demonstrated as national security adviser to President Reagan and later as the chairman of the



Joint Chiefs of Staff that he could take controversial positions on difficult issues, he is uncomfortable with ideological exhibitionism. As someone who knows him told me recently, "Colin really wants to be appointed president."

It doesn't work that way, of course. While there are many competent people willing to help Powell in a presidential quest, he will have to decide if he wants to be president enough to get his hands dirty in the political process.

Of course, Powell could avoid the messiness of the GOP primaries by running as an independent candidate, but this is not a risk-free strategy. The latest Newsweek poll shows that Powell as the Republican nominee would defeat President Clinton but finish third in a three-way race if he was the independent candidate and Dole the Republican nominee. Such a prospect is unacceptable to Powell, who has no desire to play the Ross Perot role of spoiler. If Powell thinks that running as an independent candidate means re-electing Clinton, he won't do it.

But perhaps the media and the political wiseguys are wrong to assume that a popular centrist cannot win the Republican nomination. Perhaps the ideologues depend upon a self-fulfilling prophecy in which candidates with broad appeal like Powell assume the worst and do not run.

Perhaps instead a Powell candidacy would inspire a massive turnout in the New Hampshire primary that would sweep aside both ideologues and weather vanes and establish Powell as the Republican front-runner.

Perhaps Colin Powell could be president.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY September 24 1995

Tourism Picks Up In Egypt

John Lancaster in Cairo

THEY'RE back. Toting video cameras, haggling over the price of camel rides at the Giza pyramids, navigating the Nile in five-star cruise ships or wind-driven feluccas, tourists are returning to Egypt in growing numbers, reinforcing government claims of victory over Islamic militants.

"We're doing very well," said Hans Olbertz, general manager of the Semiramis Intercontinental Hotel, the third largest in Cairo. "Tourism has recovered to a great extent. People are interested in the destination again. For two years, we were not even on the map."

The evidence is more than anecdotal. Egypt's Tourism Ministry reported last month that between January and June of this year, 1.3 million tourists visited Egypt, 19 percent more than during the same period last year.

The recovery could easily be derailed by a new surge of violence by Islamic militants, who have waged a four-year campaign against the secular regime of President Hosni Mubarak. Nor is it any panacea for Egypt's formidable economic ills, which include negative real growth and unemployment estimated at 20 percent.

Nevertheless, the turnaround has caused sighs of relief in government circles and in an industry that is one of Egypt's largest sources of hard currency and employs about one in 10 Egyptian workers.

It also has been cited by government officials as a vindication of their harsh crackdown on the militants, dozens of whom have been executed and thousands more imprisoned after judicial proceedings that have been widely condemned by international human rights groups.

Tourism's role as an economic mainstay made it a natural target for the militants, who in 1993 and 1994 staged high-profile attacks on buses, trains and Nile cruise boats that killed several foreigners and wounded a number of others.

The campaign sent tourism into a tailspin, resulting in an estimated $3 billion in lost revenue. Nowhere was the downturn more evident than in Upper Egypt, the southern region that is home to the Valley of the Kings and other Pharaonic wonders, where hotel occupancy rates in Luxor and Aswan plummeted to between 20 and 30 percent, according to Randolph Edmonds, area manager for Sofitel Hotels.

Desperate to fill their beds, hotels and cruise boats offered huge discounts; one luxury river boat cut its rate from $1750 to $590 per person for a week-long cruise including three meals daily and guide.

The militants have not attacked a foreigner since late 1994, withdrawing to several rural provinces along the Nile where they continue to stage hit-and-run attacks on police. Their violent methods have won them little popular sympathy. After the fatal shooting of a German in the resort town of Hurghada last October, local residents eagerly cooperated with police to find the killers, who were arrested within days.

"Tourism is their bread and butter," one diplomat observed.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY September 24 1995

Latins Buy Into the American Dream

Gabriel Escobar and Anne Swardson

EVEN in the hip world of MTV Latino, the word had an odd ring, alien and out of tune, until it became clear the video deejay was speaking the new language: Chequenos, pronounced CHE-kay-nos, meaning "Check us out." In this age of porous borders, it was coolly efficient, a mating of Spanish and English — "Spanglish" broadcast from Mexico to Patagonia.

To drive home the point, a moment later MTV Latino aired a new video from Spanish Fly & Company, an Argentine rock band whose hit "Carambita" was climbing the charts. The video was filmed not in Buenos Aires or Bogota but in Chicago. The video showed a swaying woman wearing a black tank top that said Detroit. The sax player had a hip-hop cap with the Adidas logo.

Trendy and transnational, the video dipped into the blend of cultures and adopted what fit the moment, an artful and effective way of reaching out and saying: "We move in both worlds. Chequenos."

With cable access booming in Latin America, MTV's message is powerful and still growing, an influential cultural tool in a market already saturated with images and products from the north. But what is most striking about this loud invasion is the silence that has greeted it.

Three decades after the Latin American left led a call against cultural imperialism, targeting the United States as its prime purveyor, the continent has unabashedly embraced "cultura lite". More and more, the Americas are accepting a universal, homogenized popular culture in which touches of Latin rhythm or Spanglish accent a dominant North American diet of songs, words and images.

Conflict over the mass media invasion is rare, save for the occasional volley fired in an academic publication — and in striking contrast to the anguished cries of the 1960s' battles to preserve cultural identity. When it does occur, the quest is quixotic — the tilter at windmills often being someone like Jorge Asis, a respected Argentine author who was lampooned and hounded from his post as culture minister last year after he suggested it was time to debate the use of English words in advertising.

"They didn't understand a thing," a chastened Asis said of his foes and the "massacre" they led against him. "There was nothing anachronistic about the proposal. They confused cultural globalization with the imposition of one language.

"For cultures to speak together, they have to be preserved," he said, treading again on what amounts to dangerous terrain these days. "They have to exist. They have to be mutually enriched. But that does not mean that to sell chocolates, or T-shirts or anything else you use another language."

But in this age of open markets, except to an admittedly small group of Latin American intellectuals, such questions no longer seem worthy of a national, much less regional, debate.

"This country is occupied, and there is no consciousness of that," said Fidel Sepulveda, an author and folklorist who directs the cultural center at Chile's Catholic University in Santiago. "I am not a chauvinist in terms of closing the country, creating a protectionist barrier around what is the Chilean identity, but I do think that people have to stand on their feet and grow from their roots . . . We have lowered the curtain on criticism, and so everything that comes from abroad enters without criticism."

"Cultural imperialism" was a key rallying slogan of the Latin American left in the 1960s. The United States exports its mass culture to Latin America and all the tools that go with it, the argument went, in hopes of creating a market and furthering its ideology. The flow is one way and insidious, and the casualties are cultural identity and economic independence: Sell NCR registers and ring up the sales.

But after many in the left took up arms in the 1970s, the cry for cultural protection was lost on the new battlefields of the next two decades. The failures of the guerrilla movements, the subsequent decline of Cuba's influence, the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the collapse of communism — all made the idea of cultural imperialism seem anachronistic, a Cold War relic.

Then, as Latin American governments began to adopt free-market economic policies in the last decade, they opened doors to a new type of American consumerism. Arguably a much stronger version than what had been so feared in the '60s, this new wave of Yankee influence encountered no opposition.

"On the cultural level, all resistance ended," said Carlos Ares, an author and editor of La Maga, an influential literary magazine in Argentina that claims to be the hemisphere's cultural vanguard. "Intellectuals who once were nearly as well-known as rock idols today are barely seen as a minority . . . There is resignation in every sense."

THE WORLDWIDE BESTSELLER – NOW A MAJOR FILM
LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE
A Novel in Monthly Instalments with Recipes, Romances and Home Remedies.
LAURA ESQUIVEL

Hot stuff . . . The emergence of a trans-American culture has led to critical success for many Latin American writers

At the same time, even critics acknowledge that open markets have energized and refreshed culture in Latin America. Cable television brings news shows from the United States, Europe and neighbors in the region. Argentines and Chileans, in many ways so different from the rest of Latin America, see and hear Colombians, Mexicans and Peruvians talking on television every night. Brazil, which has always stood somewhat apart because of its different language, sells slick and engrossing television soap operas throughout the region.

The Brazilian entertainer Xuxa has become a hemispheric cultural icon, her children's television show having first spread from Brazil to the rest of Latin America and now into the United States as well.

The book Dreaming In Cuban, by Cuban-American author Cristina Garcia, was translated into Spanish and sold well in South America; Like Water For Chocolate, by Laura Esquivel of Mexico, became a best-seller in English translation and then was made into a movie; Gabriel Garcia Marquez, joining Brazil's Jorge Amado, made it to Broadway; a new wave of Chilean authors, most of them women, took up academic posts in the United States.

All these examples give weight to the argument that the countries in the continent have always shared aspects of culture, which spread along the Inca Trail, along missionary routes, on the Pan-American Highway, or now via cable and satellite.

But Asis, among others, says he believes the current dominance of American culture in the post-Cold War world is different. "The world changed in a very short time," he said. "Suddenly, one world fell, and it was absolutely seduced by the world that imposed itself, that won . . . In a world without utopias, the market becomes a new utopia."

This view that the culture of consumerism is a type of generic culture, bringing the continent together for worse or better, is buttressed by the spread of huge shopping centers. Remarkably alike in design and in content, these free-market temples sell the same clothes (Levis, Nike), serve the same food (Pizza Hut, McDonald's, Taco Bell) and show the same movies. From Santiago to Rio de Janeiro, Bogota and Mexico City, these centers in effect allow people to travel without leaving home and to feel at home even when traveling.

BUT is the drift toward a trans-American mass culture harmful? The concern of intellectuals around the region is that the new mass media are so all-encompassing and their message so strong that they will crowd out everything else.

"There are so many things that you lose the possibility of choosing one and staying with it," said Andrea Maturana, 26, a Chilean biologist and writer whose book of sensual short stories created a sensation when it was published last year and is now in its fifth printing. "People are less trusting, more worried about themselves, more rushed. It makes me sad to see how so few people are willing to fight for what they want."

To fight this tide is to choose your battles, as Asis learned in his short-lived struggle against the English invasion. It may be impossible to prevent "chequenos" from spreading, just as it was impossible in a different age to keep out "okay", a word universally understood throughout Latin America and much of the world.

In a hemisphere where the poor and the silent are the majority, old traditions are sometimes overwhelmed by the cacophony of the new, but that does not always mean they are weak or even fading. They just may not be heard.

"Something else will come out of this," Ares said of the vast number of people whose voices are seldom heard because they are outside the cities. "Something will happen with these masses on the other side of the moat. I don't think it is something that can be communicated through television, and I don't think it will be easy when millions want to be heard."

Canada's Struggle With U.S. Culture

NOWHERE better illustrates the difficulty involved in striking a balance in the complex debate over the homogenization of culture than Canada, *write Gabriel Escobar and Anne Swardson.*

It has struggled with the encroachment of American ideas and customs for nearly its entire history. About 95 percent of films in movie theaters are American; so is 95 percent of the revenue generated from movies, according to the Canadian Conference on the Arts, a nationalist group. And nearly all major American television channels are available on cable systems.

About 66 percent of all books bought, and 80 percent of the magazines on newsstands, are non-Canadian. American culture prevails in every corner of the second-largest country on Earth: In the remote Innu Indian community of Davis Inlet in northern Labrador, 1,200 miles northeast of Detroit, natives watch Detroit television stations received by satellite.

This penetration continues despite myriad rules, requirements, protections and subsidies designed to preserve Canadian culture.

The measures also are exempted from the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico (and possibly Chile soon). The United States cannot bring an unfair-trade case to NAFTA arbitrators against those cultural protections, although it is allowed to retaliate against them.

Advocates of Canadian culture point to the success of such Canadian-based entertainers as Celine Dion, Bryan Adams and Roch Voisine as evidence that their policies nurture talent that otherwise would be buried under the American avalanche, and they say subsidies and protections help produce such popular television programs as Due South and Road To Avonlea. The fine arts and authors of books also have benefited, they say.

Enforcing cultural protections often is a complex matter, however, and can lead to trade retaliation abroad and complaints of capitulation at home.

The government late last year said it would place an 80 percent excise tax on Sports Illustrated Canada, a spinoff edition of the American magazine that featured a few Canadian articles along with the American ones, and lots of Canadian ads. U.S. officials have threatened retaliation if the proposal becomes law, as predicted later this year.

Canadian officials say the issues they grapple with every day probably will become more prevalent in other countries as technology speeds the spread of American cultural products around the world. With an eye to adopting similar strategies, other nations, some of them in Latin America, have asked the Canadian ministry that deals with cultural protection to explain its policies.

Still, with the tendency in Latin America to deregulate rather than regulate, Canada's protectionist model appears far off.

"I believe in cosmopolitanism. I believe in universalism. I believe in tolerance as a value. And I also believe in . . . cultural differences," said Alicia R.W. Camilloni, secretary of academic affairs at the University of Buenos Aires. "The question is, how do you administer cultural conflicts, and how do you produce a process of integration?"

Trapped by a Single Hyphen

Mark Falcoff

NEXT YEAR IN CUBA
A Cubano's Coming of Age in America
By Gustavo Perez Firmat
Anchor. 274pp. $22.95

GUSTAVO PEREZ FIRMAT is already known as a poet (Carolina Cuban, Bilingual Blues) and cultural critic (Life on the Hyphen). He is also a Cuban-American, which in itself says a great deal about him. For unlike almost any other ethnic group in the United States, Cuban-Americans have never been immigrants. Rather, they have been — and remain — exiles, people who were forced to leave a country from which they have never parted in any emotional sense.

Some Americans, particularly those on the populist right, find this resistance to assimilation vaguely threatening. Others, on the liberal left, regard the Cuban-American community as nothing more than a reactionary remnant of an unjust society that deserved its fate. Still others are just plain confused, since our ancestors were mostly happy to leave the places from which they came, and never aspired to return.

Much of the misunderstanding is due to the closed nature of an exceptionally tribal community. In this book, a member of the intermediate generation (born in Cuba but raised in this country) has finally decided to let outsiders in on some dark family secrets. The result is a serious work of literature — as well as a ripping good book.

We might as well start by putting all the cards on the table. The Perezes were not disillusioned revolutionaries or conscience-stricken dissidents — they were wealthy people in Cuba. Gustavo Perez Firmat's grandparents were Spanish immigrants who had developed a profitable grocery business, and their houses (and those of their children, who worked with them) were large, well-stocked with servants, late-model American cars, and the latest American gadgets. In 1960, one year after Castro's rise to power, when Perez Firmat was 11, they sensed that there would be no place for them in the new order of things, and Perez Firmat's father used what remained of a small bank account in the United States to bring his family (including his mother and his wife's mother) to Miami. There he bought a small house, earned a modest living, and raised his four children. Along the way he — and they — had to adapt.


Tribal community: 'Cuban-Americans . . . were forced to leave a country from which they never departed in any emotional sense'

If the Perez family is at all typical, it would seem that the real loss most Cubans in the United States have suffered at the hands of Castro's vaunted Revolution has been more emotional and spiritual than material. For Perez Firmat's father there was no point in acquiring property — "after all, we were rich — in Cuba." To this day, his father, a man who rode around in chauffeured Cadillacs in Cuba and who works at an automobile dealership in Miami, does not own a car.

Expatriation opened up divisions that would never have existed in Cuba, such as grandchildren barely able to speak Spanish and grown children who experience their midlife crises not by taking on mistresses but by divorcing their Cuban wives and marrying American women.

Nor do all the tensions run in one direction. As teenagers and young adults, Gustavo and two of his three siblings came to resent the condition of exile, and each in his own fashion found ways of rebelling against it. Gustavo adopted a teaching interest so specialized that his father cannot explain to his friends exactly what his eldest son does. His younger brother Jose became a radical, made several visits to Cuba, even paid a pleasant social call on the pilot and his family who now occupy their old house in Havana. Another brother became a deadbeat and a dropout, forcing the family into messy legal matters. Only Mari, the youngest, with no memory of Cuba, escaped unscathed.

The narration takes a surprising turn in the final chapters, where Perez Firmat describes his work at Duke University as a professor of Spanish-American literature, his divorce, and his remarriage to an American woman. This act, more than any other, while not eliminating the hyphen, appears to have closed something of a parenthesis. Perez Firmat has finally made peace with America and, what is more important still, with his American self. He registers to vote (Republican, naturally). But he doesn't actually go to the polls. Not yet. He is still waiting for Havana to become just another travel destination and, in so doing, to exorcise the demons of a truncated childhood and adolescence.

Unhappy at the Top

Katha Pollitt

DIVIDED LIVES
The Public and Private Struggles of Three Accomplished Women
By Elsa Walsh
Simon & Schuster. 284pp. $23

CREDIT Elsa Walsh with at least one major journalistic gift: the ability to get interviewees to say, on the record, some pretty amazing things. The media has pounced on the reckless self-revelations that dot Walsh's profile of Rachael Worby, symphony conductor and first lady of West Virginia: her steamy sexual awakening in the arms of dashing Gov. Gaston Caperton, her little tattoo, her profound misery, as a transplanted New Yorker, with life in the provinces. Walsh's other subjects are equally frank.

Well, why shouldn't women tell it like it is, for a change? In her introduction, Walsh — a reporter for The Washington Post — writes that her impulse to draw these detailed portraits rose from her conviction that the existing "biographies and memoirs seemed equally devoid of reality as my friends or I knew it. The world presented in these books was a place where women almost always were happy, accepting, and grateful. They rarely felt frustrated by their children or their husbands." The truth, she thinks, is closer to the cry uttered by one female "success story": "Why do we all carry on when we're so miserable inside and this society is not responding, or it's responding so slowly?"

Good question. I wish Walsh had tried to answer it seriously, instead of veering off into her own recipe for womanly satisfaction. This involves balancing no fewer than seven distinct areas of life: job, man, children, friends, time alone, place or home, sense of independence. The problem isn't just that this is a tall order. It's that, barely minutes after complaining that women force themselves into conventional good-girl modes of thought, she herself can imagine for them only conventional good-girl lives. Hasn't she ever heard of lesbians? Ma... woman who lived out of a ... and liked it? What ever happe... adventure, passion, daring, ori... ity, risk? Nobody writes books ... how men have to balance their ... after all.

Still, people's lives are alwa... teresting, and I enjoyed rea... about these. All three, including somewhat difficult Worby, are ... ented, smart, decent women ... repeatedly come up against the ... ure of America to adapt to wom... changing lives. Why couldn't ... Minutes" have let Meredith V... work part-time instead of for... her into a work pattern devised ... workaholic men with stay-at-h... wives? Why do voters get bent ... of shape by political wives ... minds, and last names, of their ... As for Alison Estabrook, who f... her career path blocked by the ... of open sexism that opponents ... firmative action claim no longe... ists, I only wish Walsh had ... the male gynecologist who op... her promotion on the ground ... women prefer male doctors.

Walsh says she chose to fo... "hypersuccessful" women be... "if these women of privilege ... finding the challenge of bala... their lives a struggle, then tha... something important about the ... dition of American society."

What she calls "the female c... tion" is not the same throug... society. Unlike most wo... Walsh's subjects do not have ... anything they don't want to d... three are married to emotiona... cure men who enjoy their ... success. The absence of the ... necessity that rules most wo... lives means that their strugg... pear to be mostly psychologica...

In the end, analyzing "the f... condition" by talking to ... celebrity, a surgeon and a firs... is a bit like trying to under... marriage by talking to Charle... Di. Their troubles — like the ... ses' — are real enough, but Wa... book would have been more u... if she showed the ways in w... they are not representative, as ... as the ways in which they are.

In the Labyrinth of Justice

T.H. Watkins

A CIVIL ACTION
By Jonathan Harr
Random House. 500pp. $25

WE'VE HEARD all the jokes by now. My own favorite: Why are scientists turning to lawyers instead of laboratory rats for their experiments? First, because there are more lawyers than rats. Second, because it is more difficult to become emotionally attached to lawyers. And third, because there are some things a laboratory rat simply will not do. This cynicism runs deep in our society and always has, and it may well be that it is because in the architecture of law we see the sad imperfections of the human condition most cruelly exposed — not only in the principals of any legal action, but in those warriors, the lawyers, who represent them. They keep reminding us, over and over again, both in what they find in others and reveal in themselves, just how close to the edge of the abyss we all stand. I give you, for instance, the O.J. Simpson case.

I give you, for an even better instance, Jonathan Harr's numbingly powerful A Civil Action, though be forewarned: You may be able to change the channel or turn off the television set and get the Simpson case out of your mind, but once you start A Civil Action you probably will not be able to put it from you until it is finished, and it will stay with you for a long time even then. As it should.

The case that provides Harr with his narrative was one of the most complicated and agonizing civil suits in legal history. In the mid-1960s, children in the area of east Woburn, Massachusetts, began to develop childhood leukemia in numbers that exceeded the norm. At about the same time, people in the area began to complain about their drinking water — particularly about two city wells whose water, one resident reported, "is very unpotable, very hard, and has a strong chemical taste." Still, the wells were not permanently closed until the spring of 1979, when a state environmental department official tested them and discovered that they were heavily contaminated with trichloroethylene, or TCE, a solvent. A Centers for Disease Control report in January 1981 found cause for concern, though it could not establish a link between the sudden cluster of leukemia victims and the polluted well water. The federal Environmental Protection Agency, meanwhile, put the area of the two wells on its Superfund list and began to search for the source of the contamination.

By then, more children had been diagnosed, and several already had died. Many of the parents were convinced that the water had killed them. In 1980, five families had persuaded the Boston firm of Reed & Mulligan to represent them, and in the spring of 1981 the case was given to a young associate in the firm, Jan Schlichtmann.

"IT'S A black hole," a colleague warned him, pointing out that so far no agency had been willing to declare that TCE was capable of causing leukemia — and even if it had been so proved, no person, place or thing had been identified as the source of the pollution. The case had no villains. But Schlichtmann, moved by the plight of the families but also driven by his own internal compulsions, refused to abandon the effort. For financing and strength, he turned to Trial Lawyers for Public Justice, a public-interest law firm in Washington, D.C., and his stubbornness appeared to pay off when a scientist analyzed EPA reports and concluded that the "plumes" of TCE pollution seemed to originate at a Woburn factory owned by corporate giant W.R. Grace and at a local tannery owned by the similarly deep-pocketed Beatrice Foods.

Schlichtmann had his villains now and filed a complaint against them on May 14, 1982, setting in motion a cautionary tale that Harr relates brilliantly, weaving human, legal and scientific details into a tapestry of greed, stupidity, venality, sorrow and nobility — all the elements, including flashes of low comedy, out of which classic tragedy is made.

There are plenty of compelling characters here — corporate slugs who will not accept moral responsibility for what they have done, the marvelously drawn lawyers who represent them, a judge whose own angers too often seem to cloud any sense of objectivity, the unhappy parents themselves, as various and deeply layered as anyone in the book — but at the center of the story is the profligate, inspired and maddeningly complex Schlichtmann, who flirts with greatness ... betrays it, who persuades his c... leagues to follow his obsession ... nearly destroys all of them in ... process, who wins our symp... and incurs our wrath. At times, ... want to reach into the book and ... his tousled, troubled young head ... or grab him by the lapels of his ... inously expensive suits and sh... some sense into him.

But for Schlichtmann and th... who stuck with him all the w... good sense succumbed to dre... of tens of millions in settleme... while the proceedings themse... became increasingly tangled ... snarl of legal maneuvering. M... than four years later, millions ... legal expenses and Schlichtma... flamboyant prodigality brought ... and his partners to the verge of c... lapse when the Woburn case fi... staggered to a final settlement.

Was justice done? Of course, ... But this is not a book about jus... It is a book that demonstrates w... uncanny skill the process by wh... thoroughly flawed human bein... can combine with a sometimes m... strous legal system to render jus... an irrelevancy, a dim shade hov... ing just beyond the scope of th... action — like honor, like integr... like the ghosts of dead children.

Confusion touches nuclear nerve

...he emergency at Wylfa power station has thrown ...spanner in the works of the flotation of British ...nergy, **Simon Beavis** and **Chris Barrie** report

CONFUSION engulfed the central control rooms of Wylfa nuclear power station ...d the National Grid on the night ...July 31, 1993.

By the time Wylfa contacted the ...id, Nuclear Electric engineers ...d already started to run down the ...tion. But the incident had begun ...e hours earlier, when part of a re...lling crane fell into the reactor.

As operators struggled to under...nd the precise market implica...ns of shutting down the crippled ...actor it was clear that they were, at ...st, inadequately briefed and fret...g about the cost to the company ...f the operation. It was something ...ither they nor the people at the ...d seemed to understand, or so ...e tape-recording played in Mold ...rown Court last week appears to ...ow.

The incident landed the company ...th fines of £250,000 and costs of ...138,000 for failing to ensure the ...fety of its staff at Wylfa and for ...reaching three conditions of its ...perating licence.

But had Nuclear Electric not ...ecided initially to fight the charges ...ought by the Nuclear Installations ...spectorate (NII) before changing ...s plea to guilty, full details of the ...cident might never have been ...rought to the public's attention.

It could not have come at a worse ...me. In less than a year, parts of Nuclear Electric and its smaller ...counterpart, Scottish Nuclear, are ...to be floated on the stock market as ...subsidiaries of a new company ...called British Energy.

The £3.5 billion privatisation will ...robably be the Government's last ...ajor share offering before the ...eneral election. It will see the in...dustry's most modern reactors ...ushed into the private sector while ...e ageing Magnox stations, like ...ylfa, will remain in state control, ...d eventually passed to British ...uclear Fuels to run.

...tomic power was ripped out of ...rivatisation of electricity in 1989 ...er the City balked at the multi-...lion pound costs of dismantling ...d disposing of reactors. Since then ...e industry has campaigned tire...ssly to prove it has changed: that it ...economic, efficient and safe.

...n May it seemed to have con...nced a sceptical government — ...ary for new funds for pre-...ection tax cuts and anxious for a privatisation bolt-hole, should its rail sell-off plans collapse — that the time for privatisation had come.

Yet, in Mold Crown Court last week, questions began to be asked again. The industry faced allegations that its engineers had had "their brains in neutral". Sam Harbison, senior nuclear inspector, described the incident as potentially one of the most serious he had known.

Mr Justice Morland, presiding over the case, refuted charges that commercial concerns had triumphed over safety. But he made it clear the public deserved better. The industry, he said, had shown that rare safety lapses were policed by a watchdog with teeth.

In truth there is no evidence that commercial pressures have taken priority over safety as the industry is bundled at high speed towards the private sector. But it is clear the operating environment is already commercially intense, and is likely to get more so once these companies have to answer directly to investors hungry for dividends. Directors know that in the next few months they face a tougher task convincing critics of the industry's safety.

Before the sell-off can take place, operating licences at every nuclear reactor in the country must be modified because they will be under new management control. This applies to the advanced gas-cooled reactors and Sizewell B, earmarked for sale, and for the Magnox stations being left under state control.

Next month licences will be re-advertised and comments invited from the public and concerned bodies by the end of the year. The Government is content that it has left enough time for the exercise. The NII has made it clear that it is not.

Unions opposed to privatisation and environmental groups will use the public consultations to raise new doubts, and the Wylfa incident will be handy ammunition.

Labour, still in a complex ideological muddle over the efficacy of nuclear power, is happy to concentrate its energies on derailing privatisation. It is keenly aware that safety — or the costs of safety and of safely disposing of reactors and their waste — does mean something to investors.

Last week, Labour's trade spokesman, Brian Wilson, launched a well-aimed torpedo at the sell-off. He promised that a Labour government would tear up any deals done on the industry's multi-billion pound liabilities bill and insurance cover in order to ensure that taxpayers were not treated unfairly.

The real test of the financial viability of privatisation will come when the City analyses the costs involved in dismantling atomic power stations and disposing of nuclear waste. These liabilities, and investor confidence in the industry's predictions of their ultimate cost, will be crucial to British Energy's flotation. The Government's previous attempt at an atomic sell-off collapsed in 1989 when the City became alarmed at having to write a blank cheque to cover costs running well into the next century.

AS ONE City observer pointed out, the accounting treatment of these costs will have a huge "swing factor" on the bill for privatisation. If the industry can argue convincingly for even a small percentage cut in the sums needed to dispose of waste and redundant stations, the savings made are huge.

And the industry, conveniently enough, is already arguing that experience of decommissioning is giving it enough confidence to cut cost assessments accordingly. Only last month, BNFL, the state-owned nuclear fuel reprocessing company, announced a £900 million fall in decommissioning costs.

But Patrick Green, the nuclear campaigner at the environmental pressure group, Friends of the Earth, predicts that the City will be just as alarmed by the nuclear industry's liabilities next year as it was six years ago.

Safety, he said, and the re-licensing of sites were details that could disrupt the privatisation timetable, but he added: "What could derail the sale altogether is if the City believes that waste management problems are no better than in 1989 — and they are much, much worse."

Dr Green's prediction that waste management will be the nuclear industry's Achilles' heel is based on the failure to come up with a convincing engineering solution to the cost-effective disposal of nuclear waste.

UK Nirex, the state company set up to develop a solution to waste management, wants to build a rock laboratory near the Sellafield reprocessing site to test storage options. Dr Green claimed that Friends of the Earth and academic specialists would "trash" Nirex's scientific evidence at the public inquiry now under way to examine Nirex's plans.

Confident that the inquiry will come down in favour of the protesters, Dr Green predicts that the environment secretary, John Gummer, will face a difficult choice: refuse Nirex permission — turning a spotlight on the industry's inability to find a solution to waste management — or overturn the inquiry's recommendation, in which case Friends of the Earth would challenge the decision in the courts.

The nuclear industry can also expect a political rumpus as the trade and industry select committee of backbench MPs investigates its costs and the true scale of the liabilities, conservatively estimated at £40 billion if waste management and decommissioning are included.

No profit in financial fairy tales

...a Buckingham

IT IS something close to a mira...le that Eurotunnel, which is ...empting to cover operating ...ts and repayments on £8 ...ion of debt with income run...g at just £25 million a month, ...ll with us. But the real ...gic is about to begin.

Eurotunnel is taking what is ...phemistically described as an ...terest rate holiday". This type ...bank-endorsed vacation — ...owed only to the most desper...e financial basket cases — is ...pected to last at least 18 ...onths and is designed to allow ...e company to sort out its debt.

While co-chairman Sir Alastair ...orton is locked in talks with largely somnambulent bankers, others will attempt to weave a myth of gigantic proportions. Just look at what those spinners of fairy tales over at Europe's other spectacular white elephant, EuroDisney, have accomplished. In the past month EuroDisney has reported its first quarterly "profit" and the chief executive, Philippe Bourguignon, has hinted that the operation could break even this year rather than next.

Now, most people remember EuroDisney's 6 billion francs (£755 million) rescue rights issue which saw the arrival of Prince Al Waleed and his magic money. But what is conveniently overlooked is that the dire Paris playground is making "profits" only because it has managed to shelve interest payments, plus royalty and management fees due to Walt Disney, which together run at a cool Fr1.5 billion a year. That tends to put the Fr170 million "profit" in three of its most lucrative months (April to June) into perspective for all but Mickey Mouse to see.

Others will remember when the effectively bankrupt British Satellite Broadcasting merged with the effectively bankrupt Sky Television. It seems hard to remember now when BSkyB is the country's most profitable television company, but the combination of two terminally sick enterprises spawned a business which was "profitable" only because its debt burden was temporarily forgiven and finally put to rest with flotation.

Relieved of its £2 million-a-day interest bill, Eurotunnel's financial figures will, of course, look a whole heap rosier and it will not be long before business analysts are talking of Eurotunnel's "profits".

But the interest continues to roll up — it is just that payments become even larger in the future as a result of respite today.

This is fine if the future is as lucrative as BSkyB's. But Eurotunnel is different. Its pricing is largely dictated by ferry rivals and, at today's prices, it would not be making money even with 100 per cent of the cross-Channel market. The company clearly has no alternative. But investors do — and they should spurn the impending financial fantasy.

In Brief

DOUGLAS HURD, the former foreign secretary, faced a barrage of criticism from Labour and unions as he announced plans to become a director of the NatWest Group, two months after leaving the government. He is the latest in a growing list of Tory politicians to be head-hunted by City firms.

ROGUE trader Nick Leeson's fight to avoid what he claims will be a show trial in Singapore moved to Frankfurt after the Serious Fraud Office finally decided not to ask for his extradition to Britain.

BRITAIN'S third largest building society, the Woolwich, is set to abandon its mutual status and become a bank.

BRITAIN'S retailers called on the Chancellor to bail them out of the worst trading conditions since Black Wednesday in 1992, after the latest official figures showed a combination of August's heatwave and the economic slowdown caused sales to slump last month.

BAA made a decisive foray into the American market by winning a contract to run Indianapolis airport, in a move which could be followed by similar deals in Australia and China.

GERMANY'S telecommunications company was warned by the European Commission that its plans for joint ventures with France Telecom will not receive EU approval at the end of the year, unless it liberalises access to its own internal network.

SHARE prices in the City soared to a new peak after a combination of falls in unemployment and weaker earnings growth fuelled hopes of an interest rate cut later this year.

PRUDENTIAL, Britain's largest life insurer, unveiled a 20 per cent jump in half year pre-tax profits to £335 million but acknowledged that most of the increase was due to good returns from investments.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates September 11	Sterling rates September 18
Australia	2.0571-2.0613	2.0422-2.0463
Austria	16.02-16.06	16.15-16.22
Belgium	46.84-46.94	47.24-47.34
Canada	2.0780-2.0810	2.1068-2.1098
Denmark	8.80-8.82	8.89-8.90
France	7.85-7.87	7.90-7.91
Germany	2.2789-2.2820	2.2067-2.2998
Hong Kong	11.97-11.98	11.90-11.97
Ireland	0.9788-0.9814	0.9781-0.9807
Italy	2,502-2,506	2,487-2,490
Japan	154.35-154.61	160.01-160.27
Netherlands	2.5504-2.5537	2.5728-2.5761
New Zealand	2.375-2.378	2.353-2.357
Norway	9.84-9.86	10.02-10.04
Portugal	236.31-236.94	238.26-238.89
Spain	194.87-195.16	198.23-198.52
Sweden	11.00-11.03	11.07-11.09
Switzerland	1.8676-1.8706	1.8706-1.8735
USA	1.5480-1.5490	1.5460-1.5470
ECU	1.2173-1.2188	1.2251-1.2266

FTSE100 Share Index down [illegible] at [illegible]. FTSE 250 Index down [illegible] at [illegible]. Gold up [illegible] at [illegible].

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
September 24 1995

Swiss Banks Unlock Secrets of War

William Drozdiak in Paris

LEADING Swiss banks announced last week they had discovered $34 million in dormant accounts that may belong to Holocaust victims and that they will help Jewish survivors and their heirs track down lost assets.

Lifting the veil of secrecy on one of the most controversial legacies of the war, the Swiss Bankers' Association said a partial survey of a dozen major banks that conducted most of the country's financial business in 1945 revealed nearly 900 abandoned accounts containing funds that may have been deposited by Jews and others who were persecuted and killed by the Nazis.

But the World Jewish Congress and other agencies acting on behalf of Holocaust victims say the forsaken deposits represent only a fraction of the wealth of Jewish Nazi victims. Far larger assets, estimated by some experts to be worth several billion dollars, were confiscated from Jewish victims in Eastern Europe and may have been stashed by the Nazis in Swiss accounts or safe deposit boxes.

Nazi SS leader Heinrich Himmler, for example, is believed to have dispatched a hoard of paintings, jewelry and money stolen from Hungarian Jews to Switzerland toward the end of the war. New information on "Himmler's Treasure" and other Nazi booty taken from East European Jews has come to light from the archives of East German and other Communist secret services since the collapse of the Soviet empire six years ago.

Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, will appeal for greater cooperation in determining the fate of wartime Jewish assets when he meets with Swiss President Kaspar Villiger and Swiss banking leaders. Bronfman, who also heads the World Jewish Restitution Organization, has been authorized by the Israeli government to negotiate on its behalf with the Swiss government and bankers.

To streamline searches for abandoned accounts, Swiss banks next year will open a Central Contact Office, headed by the banking association's ombudsman, that will assist the heirs of Holocaust victims in tracking down lost family assets. The decision came after a rising tide of criticism that contends the banks are hiding behind the country's statute of limitations and vaunted secrecy laws to keep the wealth of Nazi victims. Last week's announcement said the 10-year statute of limitations on dormant accounts will not apply to the wartime accounts.

In the first seven years after the war, Switzerland returned about $13 million worth of assets of Holocaust victims to rightful heirs. During the 1960s, the Swiss legislature passed a law ordering a review of unclaimed bank holdings from the Nazi era that turned up less than $8 million, which was awarded to charity. Since then, relatives of Nazi victims looking for lost deposits have been asked to pay fees ranging from $80 to $800 for account searches that have almost invariably turned up nothing.

Some funds that came to Switzerland from Jews during the war were smuggled out of Nazi-held territory at the risk of the death penalty. The money was often deposited by an intermediary in a secret numbered account, an attempt to avoid German detection that later would complicate the quest by survivors or heirs of genocide victims to retrieve family assets.

In addition, the tight secrecy surrounding Swiss banking laws and the voluminous documentation required for payments and withdrawals made it practically impossible for claimants to take possession of the deposits, since most had only the flimsiest evidence to establish their rights.

THE controversy over the lost accounts grew out of a rising public demand in Switzerland this year during 50th anniversary observances of the end of the war for an investigation of connections between the banks and the Nazi rape of Europe.

This year, the Swiss government for the first time formally apologized for its treatment of emigrant Jews during the war, many of whom were denied entry to neutral Switzerland and sent back to Germany to face almost certain death at the hands of their Nazi persecutors.

Moreover, the rise of democratic governments in Eastern Europe has produced a torrent of fresh claims from citizens in those countries who were unable to pursue the lost property of their relatives during the decades of Communist rule.

Israel Singer, general secretary of the World Jewish Congress, said in a telephone interview that the collapse of communism had produced a flood of new information and opened a new chapter in redressing the claims of Jewish wartime victims.

"This is just the beginning; we are finally getting the documents that can help track down the real, communal and cultural properties of Holocaust victims in a part of Europe that was closed for a long time," he said.

"We welcome the move by Swiss banks, and we expect them to be as forthcoming as possible in determining the rightful owners of dormant accounts and all forms of property by the Nazis." Besides Switzerland, Singer said the newly democratic governments of 15 East European countries have promised full cooperation in determining how the families of Jews persecuted in their lands should be compensated for lost or stolen property.

"These are young, new democracies, and they are trying to do the right thing," Singer said. "We certainly don't want to bankrupt them, but we also want proper restitution to be made to the families of Jewish victims."

Powell Mania Gathers Force

COMMENT
Lou Cannon

WHILE researching a magazine article on Colin Powell several years ago, I attempted to find someone who had served with him in the Army who might say a critical word about the widely esteemed general.

If such persons exist, I never found them. Powell's superiors, subordinates and peers agreed that he was a splendid soldier and fine man. The article ended up as more of a puff piece than the balanced article I wanted to write.

Seven years later, Powell puffery is all the rage. Without declaring his candidacy or partisan affiliation, Powell has become a fixture on magazine covers and the principal X factor of the 1996 presidential elections. Powell mania got a further boost last week when he began a book-signing tour for his memoir, "My American Journey," that will give thousands a firsthand look at this remarkable man.

Powell is easy to like. He is smart and tough and a straight-talker who exudes patriotism, decency and black pride. As the first inner-city president, he would bring a fresh look to urban issues and race relations, currently in a crisis state.

What does he stand for? Powell skeptics sometimes say he is a mystery man who has avoided taking stands on divisive social issues. They claim his popularity would decline if he becomes an avowed candidate and forced to take positions on every issue under the sun.

Maybe so. Similar opinions were offered in 1952 about Dwight Eisenhower, the World War II hero to whom Powell is often compared. But people liked Ike and elected him president because of his character and because he projected a needed image of national purpose at a time when Americans were increasingly repelled by the narrow claims of partisanship.

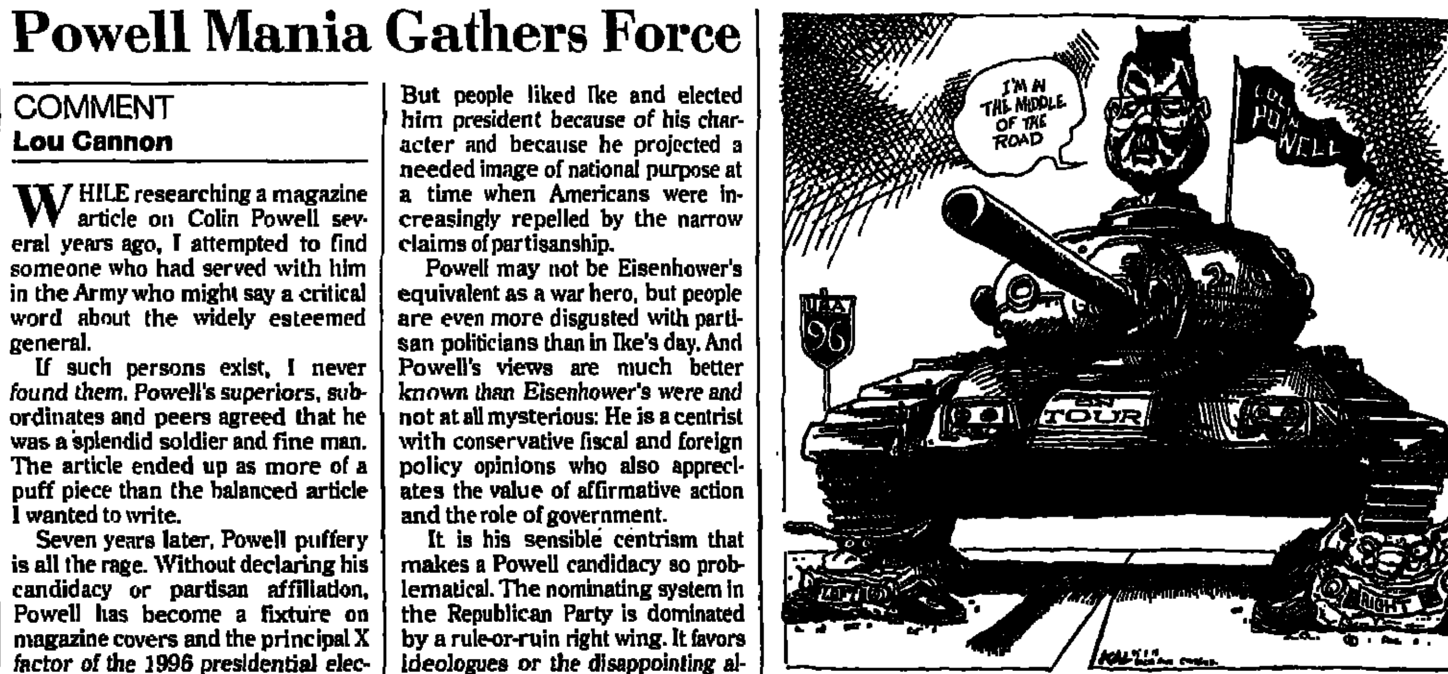
Powell may not be Eisenhower's equivalent as a war hero, but people are even more disgusted with partisan politicians than in Ike's day. And Powell's views are much better known than Eisenhower's were and not at all mysterious: He is a centrist with conservative fiscal and foreign policy opinions who also appreciates the value of affirmative action and the role of government.

It is his sensible centrism that makes a Powell candidacy so problematical. The nominating system in the Republican Party is dominated by a rule-or-ruin right wing. It favors ideologues or the disappointing alternative of weather-vane politicians who will say what is necessary to be nominated.

Moderates who survive this process are likely to be damaged goods. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and California Governor Pete Wilson, to name the most likely suspects, have ruined their moderate reputations by jumping through hoops to appease the radical right on issues such as affirmative action.

A low point was reached when Dole returned a campaign contribution that his aides had solicited from a GOP homosexual organization. It was demeaning to the donors and must have been embarrassing for Dole, an honorable man who never before had pandered to homophobic sentiments.

Powell detests such pandering. While he demonstrated as national security adviser to President Reagan and later as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he could take controversial positions on difficult issues, he is uncomfortable with ideological exhibitionism. As someone who knows him told me recently, "Colin really wants to be appointed president."



It doesn't work that way, of course. While there are many competent people willing to help Powell in a presidential quest, he will have to decide if he wants to be president enough to get his hands dirty in the political process.

Of course, Powell could avoid the messiness of the GOP primaries by running as an independent candidate, but this is not a risk-free strategy. The latest Newsweek poll shows that Powell as the Republican nominee would defeat President Clinton but finish third in a three-way race if he was the independent candidate and Dole the Republican nominee. Such a prospect is unacceptable to Powell, who has no desire to play the Ross Perot role of spoiler. If Powell thinks that running as an independent candidate means re-electing Clinton, he won't do it.

But perhaps the media and the political wiseguys are wrong to assume that a popular centrist cannot win the Republican nomination. Perhaps the ideologues depend upon a self-fulfilling prophecy in which candidates with broad appeal like Powell assume the worst and do not run.

Perhaps instead a Powell candidacy would inspire a massive turnout in the New Hampshire primary that would sweep aside both ideologues and weather vanes and establish Powell as the Republican front-runner.

Perhaps Colin Powell could be president.

Tourism Picks Up In Egypt

John Lancaster in Cairo

THEY'RE back. Toting video cameras, haggling over the price of camel rides at the Giza pyramids, navigating the Nile in five-star cruise ships or wind-driven feluccas, tourists are returning to Egypt in growing numbers, reinforcing government claims of victory over Islamic militants.

"We're doing very well," said Hans Olbertz, general manager of the Semiramis Intercontinental Hotel, the third largest in Cairo. "Tourism has recovered to a great extent. People are interested in the destination again. For two years, we were not even on the map."

The evidence is more than anecdotal. Egypt's Tourism Ministry reported last month that between January and June of this year, 1.3 million tourists visited Egypt, 19 percent more than during the same period last year.

The recovery could easily be derailed by a new surge of violence by Islamic militants, who have waged a four-year campaign against the secular regime of President Hosni Mubarak. Nor is it any panacea for Egypt's formidable economic ills, which include negative real growth and unemployment estimated at 20 percent.

Nevertheless, the turnaround has caused sighs of relief in government circles and in an industry that is one of Egypt's largest sources of hard currency and employs about one in 10 Egyptian workers.

It also has been cited by government officials as a vindication of their harsh crackdown on the militants, dozens of whom have been executed and thousands more imprisoned after judicial proceedings that have been widely condemned by international human rights groups.

Tourism's role as an economic mainstay made it a natural target for the militants, who in 1993 and 1994 staged high-profile attacks on buses, trains and Nile cruise boats that killed several foreigners and wounded a number of others.

The campaign sent tourism into a tailspin, resulting in an estimated $3 billion in lost revenue. Nowhere was the downturn more evident than in Upper Egypt, the southern region that is home to the Valley of the Kings and other Pharaonic wonders, where hotel occupancy rates in Luxor and Aswan plummeted to between 20 and 30 percent, according to Randolph Edmonds, area manager for Sofitel Hotels.

Desperate to fill their beds, hotels and cruise boats offered huge discounts; one luxury river boat cut its rate from $1750 to $590 per person for a week-long cruise including three meals daily and guide.

The militants have not attacked a foreigner since late 1994, withdrawing to several rural provinces along the Nile where they continue to stage hit-and-run attacks on police. Their violent methods have won them little popular sympathy. After the fatal shooting of a German in the resort town of Hurghada last October, local residents eagerly cooperated with police to find the killers, who were arrested within days.

"Tourism is their bread and butter," one diplomat observed.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Latins Buy Into the American Dream

Gabriel Escobar and Anne Swardson

EVEN in the hip world of MTV Latino, the word had an odd ring, alien and out of tune, until it became clear the video deejay was speaking the new language: Chequenos, pronounced CHE-kay-nos, meaning "Check us out." In this age of porous borders, it was coolly efficient, a mating of Spanish and English — "Spanglish" broadcast from Mexico to Patagonia.

To drive home the point, a moment later MTV Latino aired a new video from Spanish Fly & Company, an Argentine rock band whose hit "Carambita" was climbing the charts. The video was filmed not in Buenos Aires or Bogota but in Chicago. The video showed a swaying woman wearing a black tank top that said Detroit. The sax player had a hip-hop cap with the Adidas logo.

Trendy and transnational, the video dipped into the blend of cultures and adopted what fit the moment, an artful and effective way of reaching out and saying: "We move in both worlds. Chequenos."

With cable access booming in Latin America, MTV's message is powerful and still growing, an influential cultural tool in a market already saturated with images and products from the north. But what is most striking about this loud invasion is the silence that has greeted it.

Three decades after the Latin American left led a call against cultural imperialism, targeting the United States as its prime purveyor, the continent has unabashedly embraced "cultura lite". More and more, the Americas are accepting a universal, homogenized popular culture in which touches of Latin rhythm or Spanglish accent a dominant North American diet of songs, words and images.

Conflict over the mass media invasion is rare, save for the occasional volley fired in an academic publication — and in striking contrast to the anguished cries of the 1960s' battles to preserve cultural identity. When it does occur, the quest is quixotic — the tilter at windmills often being someone like Jorge Asis, a respected Argentine author who was lampooned and hounded from his post as culture minister last year after he suggested it was time to debate the use of English words in advertising.

"They didn't understand a thing," a chastened Asis said of his foes and the "massacre" they led against him. "There was nothing anachronistic about the proposal. They confused cultural globalization with the imposition of one language.

"For cultures to speak together, they have to be preserved," he said, treading again on what amounts to dangerous terrain these days. "They have to exist. They have to be mutually enriched. But that does not mean that to sell chocolates, or T-shirts or anything else you use another language."

But in this age of open markets, except to an admittedly small group of Latin American intellectuals, such questions no longer seem worthy of a national, much less regional, debate.

"This country is occupied, and there is no consciousness of that," said Fidel Sepulveda, an author and folklorist who directs the cultural center at Chile's Catholic University in Santiago. "I am not a chauvinist in terms of closing the country, creating a protectionist barrier around what is the Chilean identity, but I do think that people have to stand on their feet and grow from their roots . . . We have lowered the curtain on criticism, and so everything that comes from abroad enters without criticism."

"Cultural imperialism" was a key rallying slogan of the Latin American left in the 1960s. The United States exports its mass culture to Latin America and all the tools that go with it, the argument went, in hopes of creating a market and furthering its ideology. The flow is one way and insidious, and the casualties are cultural identity and economic independence: Sell NCR registers and ring up the sales.

But after many in the left took up arms in the 1970s, the cry for cultural protection was lost on the new battlefields of the next two decades. The failures of the guerrilla movements, the subsequent decline of Cuba's influence, the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the collapse of communism — all made the idea of cultural imperialism seem anachronistic, a Cold War relic.

Then, as Latin American governments began to adopt free-market economic policies in the last decade, they opened doors to a new type of American consumerism. Arguably a much stronger version than what had been so feared in the '60s, this new wave of Yankee influence encountered no opposition.

"On the cultural level, all resistance ended," said Carlos Ares, an author and editor of La Maga, an influential literary magazine in Argentina that claims to be the hemisphere's cultural vanguard. "Intellectuals who once were nearly as well-known as rock idols today are barely seen as a minority . . . There is resignation in every sense."

THE WORLDWIDE BESTSELLER - NOW A MAJOR FILM

LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE

A Novel in Monthly Instalments with Recipes, Romances and Home Remedies

LAURA ESQUIVEL

Hot stuff . . . The emergence of a trans-American culture has led to critical success for many Latin American writers

At the same time, even critics acknowledge that open markets have energized and refreshed culture in Latin America. Cable television brings news shows from the United States, Europe and neighbors in the region. Argentines and Chileans, in many ways so different from the rest of Latin America, see and hear Colombians, Mexicans and Peruvians talking on television every night. Brazil, which has always stood somewhat apart because of its different language, sells slick and engrossing television soap operas throughout the region.

The Brazilian entertainer Xuxa has become a hemispheric cultural icon, her children's television show having first spread from Brazil to the rest of Latin America and now into the United States as well.

The book Dreaming In Cuban, by Cuban-American author Cristina Garcia, was translated into Spanish and sold well in South America; Like Water For Chocolate, by Laura Esquivel of Mexico, became a best-seller in English translation and then was made into a movie; Gabriel Garcia Marquez, joining Brazil's Jorge Amado, made it to Broadway; a new wave of Chilean authors, most of them women, took up academic posts in the United States.

All these examples give weight to the argument that the countries in the continent have always shared aspects of culture, which spread along the Inca Trail, along missionary routes, on the Pan-American Highway, or now via cable and satellite.

But Asis, among others, says he believes the current dominance of American culture in the post-Cold War world is different. "The world changed in a very short time," he said. "Suddenly, one world fell, and it was absolutely seduced by the world that imposed itself, that won . . . In a world without utopias, the market becomes a new utopia."

This view that the culture of consumerism is a type of generic culture, bringing the continent together for worse or better, is buttressed by the spread of huge shopping centers. Remarkably alike in design and in content, these free-market temples sell the same clothes (Levis, Nike), serve the same food (Pizza Hut, McDonald's, Taco Bell) and show the same movies. From Santiago to Rio de Janeiro, Bogota and Mexico City, these centers in effect allow people to travel without leaving home and to feel at home even when traveling.

BUT is the drift toward a trans-American mass culture harmful? The concern of intellectuals around the region is that the new mass media are so all-encompassing and their message so strong that they will crowd out everything else.

"There are so many things that you lose the possibility of choosing one and staying with it," said Andrea Maturana, 26, a Chilean biologist and writer whose book of sensual short stories created a sensation when it was published last year and is now in its fifth printing. "People are less trusting, more worried about themselves, more rushed. It makes me sad to see how so few people are willing to fight for what they want."

To fight this tide is to choose your battles, as Asis learned in his short-lived struggle against the English invasion. It may be impossible to prevent "chequenos" from spreading, just as it was impossible in a different age to keep out "okay", a word universally understood throughout Latin America and much of the world.

In a hemisphere where the poor and the silent are the majority, old traditions are sometimes overwhelmed by the cacophony of the new, but that does not always mean they are weak or even fading. They just may not be heard.

"Something else will come out of this," Ares said of the vast number of people whose voices are seldom heard because they are outside the cities. "Something will happen with these masses on the other side of the moat. I don't think it is something that can be communicated through television, and I don't think it will be easy when millions want to be heard."

Canada's Struggle With U.S. Culture

NOWHERE better illustrates the difficulty involved in striking a balance in the complex debate over the homogenization of culture than Canada, *write Gabriel Escobar and Anne Swardson.*

It has struggled with the encroachment of American ideas and customs for nearly its entire history. About 95 percent of films in movie theaters are American; so is 95 percent of the revenue generated from movies, according to the Canadian Conference on the Arts, a nationalist group. And nearly all major American television channels are available on cable systems.

About 66 percent of all books bought, and 80 percent of the magazines on newsstands, are non-Canadian. American culture prevails in every corner of the second-largest country on Earth: In the remote Innu Indian community of Davis Inlet in northern Labrador, 1,200 miles northeast of Detroit, natives watch Detroit television stations received by satellite.

This penetration continues despite myriad rules, requirements, protections and subsidies designed to preserve Canadian culture.

The measures also are exempted from the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico (and possibly Chile soon). The United States cannot bring an unfair-trade case to NAFTA arbitrators against those cultural protections, although it is allowed to retaliate against them.

Advocates of Canadian culture point to the success of such Canadian-based entertainers as Celine Dion, Bryan Adams and Roch Voisine as evidence that their policies nurture talent that otherwise would be buried under the American avalanche, and they say subsidies and protections help produce such popular television programs as Due South and Road To Avonlea. The fine arts and authors of books also have benefited, they say.

Enforcing cultural protections often is a complex matter, however, and can lead to trade retaliation abroad and complaints of capitulation at home.

The government late last year said it would place an 80 percent excise tax on Sports Illustrated Canada, a spinoff edition of the American magazine that featured a few Canadian articles along with the American ones, and lots of Canadian ads. U.S. officials have threatened retaliation if the proposal becomes law, as predicted later this year.

Canadian officials say the issues they grapple with every day probably will become more prevalent in other countries as technology speeds the spread of American cultural products around the world. With an eye to adopting similar strategies, other nations, some of them in Latin America, have asked the Canadian ministry that deals with cultural protection to explain its policies.

Still, with the tendency in Latin America to deregulate rather than regulate, Canada's protectionist model appears far off.

"I believe in cosmopolitanism. I believe in universalism. I believe in tolerance as a value. And I also believe in . . . cultural differences," said Alicia R.W. Camilloni, secretary of academic affairs at the University of Buenos Aires. "The question is, how do you administer cultural conflicts, and how do you produce a process of integration?"

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
September 24 1995

Trapped by a Single Hyphen

Mark Falcoff

NEXT YEAR IN CUBA
A Cubano's Coming of Age
In America
By Gustavo Perez Firmat
Anchor. 274pp. $22.95

GUSTAVO PEREZ FIRMAT is already known as a poet (Carolina Cuban, Bilingual Blues) and cultural critic (Life on the Hyphen). He is also a Cuban-American, which in itself says a great deal about him. For unlike almost any other ethnic group in the United States, Cuban-Americans have never been immigrants. Rather, they have been — and remain — exiles, people who were forced to leave a country from which they have never parted in any emotional sense.



Tribal community: 'Cuban-Americans . . . were forced to leave a country from which they never departed in any emotional sense'

Some Americans, particularly those on the populist right, find this resistance to assimilation vaguely threatening. Others, on the liberal left, regard the Cuban-American community as nothing more than a reactionary remnant of an unjust society that deserved its fate. Still others are just plain confused, since our ancestors were mostly happy to leave the places from which they came, and never aspired to return.

Much of the misunderstanding is due to the closed nature of an exceptionally tribal community. In this book, a member of the intermediate generation (born in Cuba but raised in this country) has finally decided to let outsiders in on some dark family secrets. The result is a serious work of literature — as well as a ripping good book.

We might as well start by putting all the cards on the table. The Perezes were not disillusioned revolutionaries or conscience-stricken dissidents — they were wealthy people in Cuba. Gustavo Perez Firmat's grandparents were Spanish immigrants who had developed a profitable grocery business, and their houses (and those of their children, who worked with them) were large, well-stocked with servants, late-model American cars, and the latest American gadgets. In 1960, one year after Castro's rise to power, when Perez Firmat was 11, they sensed that there would be no place for them in the new order of things, and Perez Firmat's father used what remained of a small bank account in the United States to bring his family (including his mother and his wife's mother) to Miami. There he bought a small house, earned a modest living, and raised his four children. Along the way he — and they — had to adapt.

If the Perez family is at all typical, it would seem that the real loss most Cubans in the United States have suffered at the hands of Castro's vaunted Revolution has been more emotional and spiritual than material. For Perez Firmat's father there was no point in acquiring property — "after all, we were rich — in Cuba." To this day, his father, a man who rode around in chauffeured Cadillacs in Cuba and who works at an automobile dealership in Miami, does not own a car.

Expatriation opened up divisions that would never have existed in Cuba, such as grandchildren barely able to speak Spanish and grown children who experience their midlife crises not by taking on mistresses but by divorcing their Cuban wives and marrying American women.

Nor do all the tensions run in one direction. As teenagers and young adults, Gustavo and two of his three siblings came to resent the condition of exile, and each in his own fashion found ways of rebelling against it. Gustavo adopted a teaching interest so specialized that his father cannot explain to his friends exactly what his eldest son does. His younger brother Jose became a radical, made several visits to Cuba, even paid a pleasant social call on the pilot and his family who now occupy their old house in Havana. Another brother became a deadbeat and a dropout, forcing the family into messy legal matters. Only Mari, the youngest, with no memory of Cuba, escaped unscathed.

The narration takes a surprising turn in the final chapters, where Perez Firmat describes his work at Duke University as a professor of Spanish-American literature, his divorce, and his remarriage to an American woman. This act, more than any other, while not eliminating the hyphen, appears to have closed something of a parenthesis. Perez Firmat has finally made peace with America and, what is more important still, with his American self. He registers to vote (Republican, naturally). But he doesn't actually go to the polls. Not yet. He is still waiting for Havana to become just another travel destination and, in so doing, to exorcise the demons of a truncated childhood and adolescence.

Unhappy at the Top

Katha Pollitt

DIVIDED LIVES
The Public and Private Struggles of Three Accomplished Women
By Elsa Walsh
Simon & Schuster. 284pp. $23

CREDIT Elsa Walsh with at least one major journalistic gift: the ability to get interviewees to say, on the record, some pretty amazing things. The media has pounced on the reckless self-revelations that dot Walsh's profile of Rachael Worby, symphony conductor and first lady of West Virginia: her steamy sexual awakening in the arms of dashing Gov. Gaston Caperton, her little tattoo, her profound misery, as a transplanted New Yorker, with life in the provinces. Walsh's other subjects are equally frank.

Well, why shouldn't women tell it like it is, for a change? In her introduction, Walsh — a reporter for The Washington Post — writes that her impulse to draw these detailed portraits rose from her conviction that the existing "biographies and memoirs seemed equally devoid of reality as my friends or I knew it. The world presented in these books was a place where women almost always were happy, accepting, and grateful. They rarely felt frustrated by their children or their husbands." The truth, she thinks, is closer to the cry uttered by one female "success story": "Why do we all carry on when we're so miserable inside and this society is not responding, or it's responding so slowly?"

Good question. I wish Walsh had tried to answer it seriously, instead of veering off into her own recipe for womanly satisfaction. This involves balancing no fewer than seven distinct areas of life: job, man, children, friends, time alone, place or home, sense of independence. The problem isn't just that this is a tall order. It's that, barely minutes after complaining that women force themselves into conventional good-girl modes of thought, she herself can imagine for them only conventional good-girl lives. Hasn't she ever heard of lesbians? Met a woman who lived out of a suitcase and liked it? What ever happened to adventure, passion, daring, originality, risk? Nobody writes books about how men have to balance their lives, after all.

Still, people's lives are always interesting, and I enjoyed reading about these. All three, including the somewhat difficult Worby, are talented, smart, decent women who repeatedly come up against the failure of America to adapt to women's changing lives. Why couldn't "60 Minutes" have let Meredith Vieira work part-time instead of forcing her into a work pattern devised by workaholic men with stay-at-home wives? Why do voters get bent out of shape by political wives with minds, and last names, of their own? As for Alison Estabrook, who found her career path blocked by the sort of open sexism that opponents of affirmative action claim no longer exists, I only wish Walsh had named the male gynecologist who opposed her promotion on the grounds that women prefer male doctors.

Walsh says she chose to focus on "hypersuccessful" women because "if these women of privilege were finding the challenge of balancing their lives a struggle, then that said something important about the condition of American society."

What she calls "the female condition" is not the same throughout society. Unlike most women, Walsh's subjects do not have to do anything they don't want to do: All three are married to emotionally secure men who enjoy their wives' success. The absence of the sort of necessity that rules most women's lives means that their struggles appear to be mostly psychological.

In the end, analyzing "the female condition" by talking to a TV celebrity, a surgeon and a first lady is a bit like trying to understand marriage by talking to Charles and Di. Their troubles — like the Waleses' — are real enough, but Walsh's book would have been more useful if she showed the ways in which they are not representative, as well as the ways in which they are.

In the Labyrinth of Justice

T.H. Watkins

A CIVIL ACTION
By Jonathan Harr
Random House. 500pp. $25

WE'VE HEARD all the jokes by now. My own favorite: Why are scientists turning to lawyers instead of laboratory rats for their experiments? First, because there are more lawyers than rats. Second, because it is more difficult to become emotionally attached to lawyers. And third, because there are some things a laboratory rat simply will not do. This cynicism runs deep in our society and always has, and it may well be that it is because in the architecture of law we see the sad imperfections of the human condition most cruelly exposed — not only in the principals of any legal action, but in those warriors, the lawyers, who represent them. They keep reminding us, over and over again, both in what they find in others and reveal in themselves, just how close to the edge of the abyss we all stand. I give you, for instance, the O.J. Simpson case.

I give you, for an even better instance, Jonathan Harr's numbingly powerful A Civil Action, though be forewarned: You may be able to change the channel or turn off the television set and get the Simpson case out of your mind, but once you start A Civil Action you probably will not be able to put it from you until it is finished, and it will stay with you for a long time even then. As it should.

The case that provides Harr with his narrative was one of the most complicated and agonizing civil suits in legal history. In the mid-1960s, children in the area of east Woburn, Massachusetts, began to develop childhood leukemia in numbers that exceeded the norm. At about the same time, people in the area began to complain about their drinking water — particularly about two city wells whose water, one resident reported, "is very unpotable, very hard, and has a strong chemical taste." Still, the wells were not permanently closed until the spring of 1979, when a state environmental department official tested them and discovered that they were heavily contaminated with trichloroethylene, or TCE, a solvent. A Centers for Disease Control report in January 1981 found cause for concern, though it could not establish a link between the sudden cluster of leukemia victims and the polluted well water. The federal Environmental Protection Agency, meanwhile, put the area of the two wells on its Superfund list and began to search for the source of the contamination.

By then, more children had been diagnosed, and several already had died. Many of the parents were convinced that the water had killed them. In 1980, five families had persuaded the Boston firm of Reed & Mulligan to represent them, and in the spring of 1981 the case was given to a young associate in the firm, Jan Schlichtmann.

"IT'S A black hole," a colleague warned him, pointing out that so far no agency had been willing to declare that TCE was capable of causing leukemia — and even if it had been so proved, no person, place or thing had been identified as the source of the pollution. The case had no villains. But Schlichtmann, moved by the plight of the families but also driven by his own internal compulsions, refused to abandon the effort. For financing and strength, he turned to Trial Lawyers for Public Justice, a public-interest law firm in Washington, D.C., and his stubbornness appeared to pay off when a scientist analyzed EPA reports and concluded that the "plumes" of TCE pollution seemed to originate at a Woburn factory owned by corporate giant W.R. Grace and at a local tannery owned by the similarly deep-pocketed Beatrice Foods.

Schlichtmann had his villains now and filed a complaint against them on May 14, 1982, setting in motion a cautionary tale that Harr relates brilliantly, weaving human, legal and scientific details into a tapestry of greed, stupidity, venality, sorrow and nobility — all the elements, including flashes of low comedy, out of which classic tragedy is made.

There are plenty of compelling characters here — corporate slugs who will not accept moral responsibility for what they have done, the marvelously drawn lawyers who represent them, a judge whose own angers too often seem to cloud any sense of objectivity, the unhappy parents themselves, as various and deeply layered as anyone in the book — but at the center of the story is the profligate, inspired and maddeningly complex Schlichtmann, who flirts with greatness and betrays it, who persuades his colleagues to follow his obsession and nearly destroys all of them in the process, who wins our sympathy and incurs our wrath. At times, you want to reach into the book and pat his tousled, troubled young head — or grab him by the lapels of his ruinously expensive suits and shake some sense into him.

But for Schlichtmann and those who stuck with him all the way, good sense succumbed to dreams of tens of millions in settlements, while the proceedings themselves became increasingly tangled in a snarl of legal maneuvering. More than four years later, millions in legal expenses and Schlichtmann's flamboyant prodigality brought him and his partners to the verge of collapse when the Woburn case finally staggered to a final settlement.

Was justice done? Of course not. But this is not a book about justice. It is a book that demonstrates with uncanny skill the process by which thoroughly flawed human beings can combine with a sometimes monstrous legal system to render justice an irrelevancy, a dim shade hovering just beyond the scope of the action — like honor, like integrity, like the ghosts of dead children.

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Confusion touches nuclear nerve

The emergency at Wylfa power station has thrown a spanner in the works of the flotation of British Energy, **Simon Beavis** and **Chris Barrie** report

CONFUSION engulfed the central control rooms of Wylfa nuclear power station and the National Grid on the night of July 31, 1993.

By the time Wylfa contacted the Grid, Nuclear Electric engineers had already started to run down the station. But the incident had begun nine hours earlier, when part of a refuelling crane fell into the reactor.

As operators struggled to understand the precise market implications of shutting down the crippled reactor it was clear that they were, at least, inadequately briefed and fretting about the cost to the company of the operation. It was something neither they nor the people at the Grid seemed to understand, or so the tape-recording played in Mold Crown Court last week appears to show.

The incident landed the company with fines of £250,000 and costs of £138,000 for failing to ensure the safety of its staff at Wylfa and for breaching three conditions of its operating licence.

But had Nuclear Electric not decided initially to fight the charges brought by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) before changing its plea to guilty, full details of the incident might never have been brought to the public's attention.

It could not have come at a worse time. In less than a year, parts of Nuclear Electric and its smaller counterpart, Scottish Nuclear, are to be floated on the stock market as subsidiaries of a new company called British Energy.

The £3.5 billion privatisation will probably be the Government's last major share offering before the general election. It will see the industry's most modern reactors pushed into the private sector while the ageing Magnox stations, like Wylfa, will remain in state control, and eventually passed to British Nuclear Fuels to run.

Atomic power was ripped out of privatisation of electricity in 1989 after the City balked at the multi-billion pound costs of dismantling and disposing of reactors. Since then the industry has campaigned tirelessly to prove it has changed: that it is economic, efficient and safe.

In May it seemed to have convinced a sceptical government — hungry for new funds for pre-election tax cuts and anxious for a privatisation bolt-hole, should its rail sell-off plans collapse — that the time for privatisation had come.

Yet, in Mold Crown Court last week, questions began to be asked again. The industry faced allegations that its engineers had had "their brains in neutral". Sam Harbison, senior nuclear inspector, described the incident as potentially one of the most serious he had known.

Mr Justice Morland, presiding over the case, refuted charges that commercial concerns had triumphed over safety. But he made it clear the public deserved better. The industry, he said, had shown that rare safety lapses were policed by a watchdog with teeth.

In truth there is no evidence that commercial pressures have taken priority over safety as the industry is bundled at high speed towards the private sector. But it is clear the operating environment is already commercially intense, and is likely to get more so once these companies have to answer directly to investors hungry for dividends. Directors know that in the next few months they face a tougher task convincing critics of the industry's safety.

Before the sell-off can take place, operating licences at every nuclear reactor in the country must be modified because they will be under new management control. This applies to the advanced gas-cooled reactors and Sizewell B, earmarked for sale, and for the Magnox stations being left under state control.

Next month licences will be re-advertised and comments invited from the public and concerned bodies by the end of the year. The Government is content that it has left enough time for the exercise. The NII has made it clear that it is not.

Unions opposed to privatisation and environmental groups will use the public consultations to raise new doubts, and the Wylfa incident will be handy ammunition.

Labour, still in a complex ideological muddle over the efficacy of nuclear power, is happy to concentrate its energies on derailing privatisation. It is keenly aware that safety — or the costs of safety and of safely disposing of reactors and their waste — does mean something to investors.

Last week, Labour's trade spokesman, Brian Wilson, launched a well-aimed torpedo at the sell-off. He promised that a Labour government would tear up any deals done on the industry's multi-billion pound liabilities bill and insurance cover in order to ensure that taxpayers were not treated unfairly.

The real test of the financial viability of privatisation will come when the City analyses the costs involved in dismantling atomic power stations and disposing of nuclear waste. These liabilities, and investor confidence in the industry's predictions of their ultimate cost, will be crucial to British Energy's flotation. The Government's previous attempt at an atomic sell-off collapsed in 1989 when the City became alarmed at having to write a blank cheque to cover costs running well into the next century.

AS ONE City observer pointed out, the accounting treatment of these costs will have a huge "swing factor" on the bill for privatisation. If the industry can argue convincingly for even a small percentage cut in the sums needed to dispose of waste and redundant stations, the savings made are huge.

And the industry, conveniently enough, is already arguing that experience of decommissioning is giving it enough confidence to cut cost assessments accordingly. Only last month, BNFL, the state-owned nuclear fuel reprocessing company, announced a £900 million fall in decommissioning costs.

But Patrick Green, the nuclear campaigner at the environmental pressure group, Friends of the Earth, predicts that the City will be just as alarmed by the nuclear industry's liabilities next year as it was six years ago.

Safety, he said, and the re-licensing of sites were details that could disrupt the privatisation timetable, but he added: "What could derail the sale altogether is if the City believes that waste management problems are no better than in 1989 — and they are much, much worse."

Dr Green's prediction that waste management will be the nuclear industry's Achilles' heel is based on the failure to come up with a convincing engineering solution to the cost-effective disposal of nuclear waste.

UK Nirex, the state company set up to develop a solution to waste management, wants to build a rock laboratory near the Sellafield reprocessing site to test storage options. Dr Green claimed that Friends of the Earth and academic specialists would "trash" Nirex's scientific evidence at the public inquiry now under way to examine Nirex's plans.

Confident that the inquiry will come down in favour of the protesters, Dr Green predicts that the environment secretary, John Gummer, will face a difficult choice: refuse Nirex permission — turning a spotlight on the industry's inability to find a solution to waste management — or overturn the inquiry's recommendation, in which case Friends of the Earth would challenge the decision in the courts.

The nuclear industry can also expect a political rumpus as the trade and industry select committee of backbench MPs investigates its costs and the true scale of the liabilities, conservatively estimated at £40 billion if waste management and decommissioning are included.

No profit in financial fairy tales

Lisa Buckingham

IT IS something close to a miracle that Eurotunnel, which is attempting to cover operating costs and repayments on £8 billion of debt with income running at just £25 million a month, is still with us. But the real magic is about to begin.

Eurotunnel is taking what is euphemistically described as an "interest rate holiday". This type of bank-endorsed vacation — allowed only to the most desperate financial basket cases — is expected to last at least 18 months and is designed to allow the company to sort out its debt.

While co-chairman Sir Alastair Morton is locked in talks with largely somnambulent bankers, others will attempt to weave a myth of gigantic proportions. Just look at what those spinners of fairy tales over at Europe's other spectacular white elephant, EuroDisney, have accomplished. In the past month EuroDisney has reported its first quarterly "profit" and the chief executive, Philippe Bourguignon, has hinted that the operation could break even this year rather than next.

Now, most people remember EuroDisney's 6 billion francs (£755 million) rescue rights issue which saw the arrival of Prince Al Waleed and his magic money. But what is conveniently overlooked is that the dire Paris playground is making "profits" only because it has managed to shelve interest payments, plus royalty and management fees due to Walt Disney, which together run at a cool Fr1.5 billion a year. That tends to put the Fr170 million "profit" in three of its most lucrative months (April to June) into perspective for all but Mickey Mouse to see.

Others will remember when the effectively bankrupt British Satellite Broadcasting merged with the effectively bankrupt Sky Television. It seems hard to remember now when BSkyB is the country's most profitable television company, but the combination of two terminally sick enterprises spawned a business which was "profitable" only because its debt burden was temporarily forgiven and finally put to rest with flotation.

Relieved of its £2 million-a-day interest bill, Eurotunnel's financial figures will, of course, look a whole heap rosier and it will not be long before business analysts are talking of Eurotunnel's "profits".

But the interest continues to roll up — it is just that payments become even larger in the future as a result of respite today.

This is fine if the future is as lucrative as BSkyB's. But Eurotunnel is different. Its pricing is largely dictated by ferry rivals and, at today's prices, it would not be making money even with 100 per cent of the cross-Channel market. The company clearly has no alternative. But investors do — and they should spurn the impending financial fantasy.

In Brief

DOUGLAS HURD, the former foreign secretary, faced a barrage of criticism from Labour and unions as he announced plans to become a director of the NatWest Group, two months after leaving the government. He is the latest in a growing list of Tory politicians to be head-hunted by City firms.

ROGUE trader Nick Leeson's fight to avoid what he claims will be a show trial in Singapore moved to Frankfurt after the Serious Fraud Office finally decided not to ask for his extradition to Britain.

BRITAIN'S third largest building society, the Woolwich, is set to abandon its mutual status and become a bank.

BRITAIN'S retailers called on the Chancellor to bail them out of the worst trading conditions since Black Wednesday in 1992, after the latest official figures showed a combination of August's heatwave and the economic slowdown caused sales to slump last month.

BAA made a decisive foray into the American market by winning a contract to run Indianapolis airport, in a move which could be followed by similar deals in Australia and China.

GERMANY'S telecommunications company was warned by the European Commission that its plans for joint ventures with France Telecom will not receive EU approval at the end of the year, unless it liberalises access to its own internal network.

SHARE prices in the City soared to a new peak after a combination of falls in unemployment and weaker earnings growth fuelled hopes of an interest rate cut later this year.

PRUDENTIAL, Britain's largest life insurer, unveiled a 20 per cent jump in half year pre-tax profits to £335 million but acknowledged that most of the increase was due to good returns from investments.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates September 11	Sterling rates September 18
Australia	2.0571-2.0613	2.0422-2.0463
Austria	16.02-16.06	16.15-16.22
Belgium	46.84-46.94	47.24-47.34
Canada	2.0780-2.0610	2.1068-2.1098
Denmark	8.80-8.82	8.89-8.90
France	7.85-7.87	7.90-7.91
Germany	2.2789-2.2820	2.2967-2.2998
Hong Kong	11.97-11.98	11.96-11.97
Ireland	0.9788-0.9814	0.9781-0.9807
Italy	2,502-2,506	2,487-2,490
Japan	154.35-154.61	160.01-160.27
Netherlands	2.5504-2.5537	2.5728-2.5761
New Zealand	2.375-2.378	2.353-2.357
Norway	9.94-9.96	10.02-10.04
Portugal	236.31-236.94	238.26-238.89
Spain	194.87-195.16	196.23-196.62
Sweden	11.00-11.03	11.07-11.09
Switzerland	1.8678-1.8708	1.8706-1.8735
USA	1.5480-1.5490	1.5460-1.5470
ECU	1.2173-1.2188	1.2251-1.2266

FTSE100 Share index down 16 at [illegible]. FTSE 250 index down [illegible] at [illegible]. Gold up [illegible] at [illegible].

MBAs: In the blue corner

Oxford has belatedly recognised Mammon, writes **Simon Caulkin**

THIS IS a tale of two business schools, by a pleasing symmetry the first and the last in the country. Both are undertaking ambitious new initiatives and, if either comes off, it will herald a significant upheaval in the UK business school pecking order.

The first is Manchester, created along with the London Business School in 1965 as part of the project to forge a new economy in the white heat of technocracy. Over the last few years MBS, a graduate school like London, has by its own standards been an underachiever, undermined by strategic disagreement and at odds with its university parent. It is now attempting a comeback.

The last — well, one guess: which institution would choose to announce the start of its MBA course, the keystone of a highly ambitious vision, just when an already overcrowded sector has been swollen by the arrival of the new universities, when government funding is being cut and when companies around the world are reassessing the value of a business-school education? Yes, only Oxford.

Between Manchester and Oxford, more than 100 business or management schools have sprung up, covering just about every level and niche imaginable. So what is the justification for the last in the line?

"Sometimes it's a great advantage being late," insists Professor Colin Mayer, deputy director of Oxford's School of Management Studies. As a result of deep study of the real needs, he says, Oxford aims to tap a different MBA market from almost everywhere else. "We're looking very internationally," he says, targeting "places like Stanford and Chicago".

Mayer says that, apart from its international orientation, the distinguishing mark of Oxford management is that it will be a liberal education, not vocational training — "something as intellectually challenging as anything in the curriculum".

To this end, business studies at both undergraduate and postgraduate level will not be hived off in a stand-alone institution like most of the European competition, but (as at Stanford and Chicago) integrated with the rest of the university. In the words of Professor Anthony Hopwood, newly recruited from the London School of Economics as deputy director in charge of the MBA, it will be "part of the wider community of people dealing with other subjects whom we can involve and draw in".

Oxford claims this intellectual hinterland is unique; stand-alone institutions like LBS just don't have the international relations specialists, economists, sociologists, political scientists or philosophers to interact with. Hopwood adds, "a touch provocatively", that he has a vision of "an intelligent business school: one that makes a serious attempt to advance knowledge and understanding in the business area, albeit in a way that's applied".

As an example, Hopwood cites Chicago and the development of modern finance theory, which has revolutionised the world of finance practice. "So that the people who did it have their Nobel prizes, but at the same time Wall Street is different as a result."

There is a precedent. Hopwood recalls that in the 1950s and 1960s Oxford was the centre for serious work on industrial relations. Distinguished alumni include Lord McCarthy, Hugh Clegg and George Bain, now director of LBS. Says Hopwood: "The challenge now is, can that be done in other areas?"

Hopwood thinks the answer is yes, and if it is, then Oxford is trying to do something "quite big"; which it must be if it is to justify the £40 million the university is committed to raise to house and support what will be one of its largest faculties.

AMBITIOUS? Yes: but Hopwood and Mayer point out that at national level there is much at stake, not least the boosting of the social positioning of business and management. "When Warwick moved into business and management there was a lot at stake for the university, but it didn't have quite the same degree of potential significance at the higher level," reflects Hopwood.

At LBS, George Bain believes that given the enviable brand name it would be hard for Oxford to fail — but it will take a few years to get up to speed: "I think the problem will be my successor's, not mine."

But the make-or-break issue for management at Oxford remains the relationship with the university. Will an institution that has taken so long to be convinced of the value of the discipline now accept and nurture it — or reject it? Mayer replies that now the move has been made, the university has no choice: Oxford won't tolerate a second or third-rate business school. Outsiders aren't so sure.

Professor John Arnold, the new director of Manchester Business School, has been "greatly relieved" over the last five years by Oxbridge's failure to get management studies together.

He is still not unduly worried by Cambridge, whose impact on the university has been small, but concedes that Oxford may now be a tougher proposition. "Will the university take management seriously? Our hope is that it will continue to be as arrogant as in the past. It has a lot of ground to make up."

Arnold, appointed last July, is moving MBS on to a less defensive footing. Keywords of the new strategic plan are (no surprise) "international", "excellent", "research but real world", and "project-based".

To remedy a research shortfall MBS is appointing no fewer than six new professors, an increase of 50 per cent. It is also moving towards more specialist MBAs, whether by subject or firm: Manchester is running an MBA designed specially for IBM, a health-service MBA and a public-sector course, just announced.

At the same time, for the second half of its business executive education, MBS is working to set up "clubs" of blue-chip clients over a range of areas for whom it could provide joint courses.

But the key to MBS's ambitions is a mooted "federal" link between four of the city's confusingly separate management departments and schools: MBS itself, the Manchester School of Management at Umist, and the University of Manchester's highly rated department of accounting and finance. A fourth participant, Prest (Programme of Policy Research in Engineering, Science and Technology) is also part of the University of Manchester. Says Arnold: "If this works, we will have the best full-service management school in Europe."

As with Oxford, the only proof of the plan is in the implementation. On the plus side, Manchester already has its centres of excellence. It will need to integrate them physically, but that will cost a fraction of Oxford's £40m. On the minus side, there are political interfaces to manage as each of the institutions strives to keep its own identity. MBS still has some cost-cutting to do to help service the capital cost of upgrading its executive education facilities. A lot, too, will depend on it making up the research deficit.

By completely different routes, Manchester and Oxford have thus found their way to destinations that have something in common, at least in concept. Arnold claims that the quality of applicants for the new chairs already shows the advantage of linking with other departments, the major difference with Oxford being Manchester's much more established post-experience side.

"I still think Manchester is more conducive to business and management studies than Oxford," he says. As for Bain, LBS's interested observer takes a statesmanlike view. If they work well, both Oxford and MBS's revival are welcome, even as rivals: "The UK's problem is too few good management schools, not too many." — *The Observer*

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS

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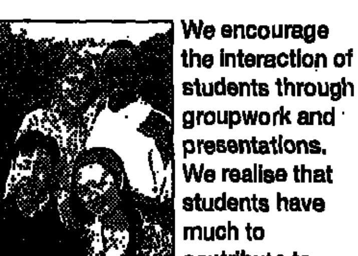


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APPOINTMENTS

Pure, white and deadly

Roger Eatwell samples the smartly packaged racism now visible on Internet screens

THE WORD "Stormfront" in bright red Gothic letters against a grey screen background tells me that I've entered a racist site on the Internet.

Worrying though pornography on the Net might be, the largely unnoticed growth of racism poses even more serious problems. This becomes clear if you take a brief guided tour round the Stormfront site.

Most of the racist Net sites are American, and Stormfront's opening menus seem to offer the usual white supremacist fare of paranoid obsession with conspiracies to destroy the "American way of life" (a rural paradise where men can roam free with guns). But its Celtic cross logo signals, to those familiar with fascist iconography, that this site is for a more international audience: it was the emblem of the Charlemagne Waffen-SS division which defended Hitler's bunker in the last days of the second world war.

A recent Stormfront quote of the week comes from Oswald Spengler — the author of The Decline Of The West and a man much admired by neofascists who fear that white civilisation is entering irreversible decline.

The theme is continued in Stormfront's German section, where Spengler, and fellow-writer Ernst Junger, are eulogised as prophets of the need to reconstruct a more homogenous, and self-defensively martial, European society. Stormfront also offers links to other sites, including Greg Raven's "Home Page" — a strange house, full of Holocaust denial material.

On the Resistance site the Net is being used to sell racist pop records: albums such as Nordic Thunder's "Born to Hate" (written in blood red), with a cover featuring two fighting dogs eager for action, and a sound facility to sample the lyrics — the "ultimate in pro-White/Hardcore". Other groups include Rahowa, an acronym for Racial Holy War. Material previously only available to an alienated fringe is now being offered to a world market.

Neo-fascists and racists have for years believed that their messages have been ignored, or parodied, by the mainstream media — often linked to their view that Jews control the media. The Internet offers them distribution of the material to people across national boundaries, often bypassing the law: publishing Holocaust denial material is illegal in France and Germany. Racists are targeting the Net as the ideal medium.

Liberal supporters of the Net defend its Babel of voices, claiming that the best arguments will win. Certainly, more anti-racist material is emerging, especially relating to the Holocaust denial, which has spawned sites that specifically rebut lies and misleading information. Some of the e-mail racist discussion groups also attract contributions from anti-racists. But psychologists say that most people don't conform to the liberal model of the rational individual, weighing the pros and cons of debate. We take on board only what we want to hear. And some Net racism is deceptively appealing. The Stormfront site is well produced and visually pleasing — which makes it seem respectable in a way that old, tackily produced, racist material never was.

The content does not always conform to old images of racism — a belief in genetic racial differences linked to hierarchies. The New Racism is more concerned with a sanitised defence of identity and culture, and is phrased in ways outside the realms of existing race relations legislation. It is hard to see how it could be banned in any society that values free speech, and it can be attractive to people who might be repelled by cruder forms of racism.

Stormfront's Celtic Cross

Something more vicious is growing too. Groups like the National Alliance, whose Net site can be accessed via Stormfront, believe mass racial confrontation is imminent in Europe and the US. Their aims are summed up vividly in the acronym of the White Aryan Resistance, which has its skull and crossbones logo in Stormfront's graphics bank. Although inflammatory racial material is illegal, it is difficult to see how it could be banned. In the US, where some Net service providers have occasionally refused to provide access to racist groups, the material has quickly re-emerged at another site — with e-mail and bulletin boards distributing the new address.

Academics disagree over the causes of violence aimed at ethnic communities — not least in "tolerant" Britain; though it may be that people are motivated by an overwhelming sense of threat to their lifestyle, and more specifically by access to networks that legitimise their sense of frustration, turning it into action. Racism on the Net can only reinforce these feelings. This might not matter if the number of people who were attracted to such messages was small. But there is evidence that there are plenty of young white males who feel desperately alienated by swift social change and the poor jobs that are the only working-class male employment opportunities in post-industrial society. It only needs a relatively small percentage of this group to turn to violence to cause mayhem — including possibly a violent response from groups within the ethnic communities. This is exactly what is sought by some of those who preach race war.

As I scroll down Stormfront's menu, I notice a link to another site which proclaims that CyberHate is back. Clicking on, I find this site is run by a student at the University of Texas, who offers access to other extremist sites. The range of racist and fascist material is growing rapidly and becoming more sophisticated. How can democracies respond?

A life of hell for the wife of a god

In small towns south of Bombay, girls as young as six are being 'married' into sexual slavery. **Christine Aziz** reports on religious cults that lead to oppression

TWELVE-year-old Hamanta is about to be married to a god. Bunches of neem leaves have been tied around her naked body and placed in her mouth. Her face is bright yellow with turmeric paste and her eyes are cast to the ground as she is led by a priest to the shrine of the goddess Yellama, set in a tiny temple outside Saundatti, south of Bombay.

Hamanta's fate was sealed when the priest told her parents that if they wanted a son they must give one of their three daughters to Yellama. The priest examined each of the girls' heads and selected Hamanta because she had a large matted tangle in her hair — considered to be a sign of the goddess. On older *devidasis* (servants of the god) the matted hair hangs like a doormat from their heads and is called a *jut*.

The priest ties a string of five red and white glass beads around Hamanta's neck and in an instant she becomes the wife of Yellama's consort, Jamdagni, condemned to a life of sexual slavery. Several days later, Hamanta's virginity is auctioned by the cult's priest to the most prosperous men in the local villages. In a society where the deflowering of a virgin is believed to increase virility and cure venereal disease, bidding is high. She is sold to a 67-year-old landowner for 20,000 rupees (about £400).

Her fate is likely to be that of other young devidasis — she will stay with him until he tires of her, and then she will be passed from one man to another, probably ending up as a prostitute in one of India's main cities. Pimps scour the countryside, recruiting and often kidnapping for their brothels.

In this area alone, more than 300 girls, some as young as six, are initiated each year into the devidasi system. Moves by the government to outlaw it have merely driven the practice underground; warnings that devidasis are accelerating the spread of Aids have led to a tougher crackdown, but devotees, afraid of angering their deities and incurring poor rainfall and bad harvests, have fiercely opposed police interference.

Devidasi means "servant of god" but in modern-day India has become a euphemism for temple prostitute. The custom is believed to have originated from goddess cults in southern India, where celibate young women officiated at rituals and were taught music and religious dancing. Today the custom continues in a corrupted form among the lower castes in the southern states of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, although vestiges of their religious duties remain.

Despite their hardships, many devidasis remain spirited women. Unusually for Indian daughters, devidasis inherit property from their fathers because they retain the family name. They are often a family's only source of income and are considered more valuable than sons. The devidasis are probably the only women in India to welcome the birth of a daughter — she will bring money into the home and a deity's blessing, but more importantly, a devidasi daughter avoids the cost of a dowry, paid by the bride's parents to the groom's family.

Akkati Dattu Vanne, aged 40, lives alone in a tiny, two-room house in Nipani, a small town 100 kilometres from Saundatti. She is renowned for her beautiful voice and is often asked to sing at weddings. She is a strong, opinionated woman whose discontent with the devidasi system is not prompted by disillusionment with her faith but by unrequited love and her society's censure of single women.

She was 17 when she fell in love with Elia, the father of her five children, while she was begging with other devidasis. "We are condemned and abused," she says. "We should be allowed to lead a common life like other ladies.

"In the market place people look at me and condemn me. They say, 'This is the lady who has no husband, who can go with anyone.' But I am happy alone. I get enough to eat."

Past solutions by the government to the devidasi problem have included giving grants of up to 30,000 rupees to men to marry devidasis. But many of the women refuse the proposals that come their way. "Why should we marry?" asks Leela Tomanna, a spokesman for 1,200 devidasis living in a sprawling shanty town in Pune. She wears her jut — the width of a plate — with obvious pride. " We see how our married sisters live, having to ask their husband's permission every time they go to the toilet, washing his clothes, cooking his food all day. At least we can come and go as we please. Our main problem is earning a living."


A slave to religion . . . Ellama, an 11-year-old *devidasi*, at the Yellama temple in Saundatti
PHOTOGRAPH: CAROLINE PENN

It was not until the pro-equality Dalit Panther movement of the early 1970s that the plight of the devidasis was put on the political agenda. The Dalit Panthers were made up mainly of low castes — "Untouchables".

Dr Neelam Gorhe became involved with the Dalit movement while a student and now runs a clinic for devidasis on the outskirts of Pune. "Many people say the devidasis have the social prestige of being married to a god, but the Dalit movement sees this so-called prestige as a reward for being oppressed," Dr Gorhe says. "Feminists make the mistake of saying the devidasis are better off than the common woman because they are independent. But they are worse off. They are exploited by high-caste men, by religion, by families."

The London-based organisation, Anti-Slavery International, has recently included devidasis in a report presented to the United Nations on ritual slavery. But it is more likely that any beneficial changes will come from the devidasis themselves. All over the country small groups are allying themselves to community activists and confronting their exploitation.

In Nipani, a history of unionisation in the tobacco industry led in 1984 to the setting up of a support agency for devidasis, who are also tobacco workers. Savadi was founded by Sushila Naik, aged 38, after searching Bombay's brothels for a fellow devidasi. "I never found her," says Sushila, "but I was so appalled by what I saw, I vowed to change things for us. When I returned I cut off my jut. When I saw nothing happened — Yellama was not angry with me — I encouraged other devidasis to do the same." The organisation is building a home for elderly devidasis and provides loans for women wanting to set up small businesses.

SUSHILA lives next door to her ageing parents in a house she bought herself through her earnings as a Savadi worker and a bank loan. She still follows some of the devidasi traditions and keeps one room for her portable Yellama shrine. "I am totally free and not pressurised by a husband. I want it to stay that way," she says. "When I saw my friends being dragged from their beds and raped, I decided I would spend the rest of my life celibate.

"A woman can stay single in India, but people look at her differently and think she is for bedding only. There is also the question of the children's legitimacy. They suffer a lot because they are children of devidasis. Very often the children abandon their mothers when they grow up because they don't want the social stigma attached to them."

Sushila admits that she and her fellow Savadi members are trying to do what many consider impossible — overcome exploitation while retaining their independence as single women. If they succeed they will be showing Indian women that it is possible to lead economically independent lives without being considered deviants.

Children caught in a vicious tourist trap

Linda Grant lambasts the men who travel from all over the world to sample south-east Asia's sex trade

JOURNALISM takes you everywhere and so it was, in the summer of, 1989, that I found myself in a strip club in Bangkok. On the stage, a girl in her early teens was performing the ping-pong act. This involved inserting ping-pong balls up her vagina and then letting them slide moistly down again to the silent attention of a couple of hundred men.

I was the only woman in the audience. Another girl came up and slid down on a seat between myself and the male photographer I was with. Assuming we were a couple, she offered to take us to her room for a threesome. The photographer strung her along for a bit, attracted and flattered. But when it became clear that nothing was to take place, the girl became very anxious. We left hurriedly.

"You have to admit," the photographer said, "they're beautiful women." But I hadn't seen any women in the club, only children. They were little girls whom someone had taught what moves you made to appear sexy.

The next day we went to Vietnam, the country that unwittingly began the sex tourism of south-east Asia. At the height of the US military presence in the late sixties, there were 600,000 troops and 500,000 prostitutes, almost one for every GI. By the time the war ended in 1975, 64 per cent were infected with syphilis and 30 per cent had gonorrhoea.

The excursion in Bangkok in 1989 had been my idea, to give me a sense of what Saigon would have been like during the war. We were in Vietnam to find out what had happened to the bar girls of Saigon and to follow up rumours that prostitution had returned to the country with the first stages of the reintroduction of a tourist industry.

It proved fairly hard to find any prostitutes then. We were a bit early. By 1992, three years later, the Vietnamese Women's Union estimated that the numbers were up to 60,000, of which nearly 4,000 were under 16.

The American débâcle in Indo-China was the springboard for the creation of a multi-billion dollar industry, sex tourism, which spread throughout south-east Asia when the war ended and Vietnam's borders were closed. Men travel abroad to get what they can't obtain at home — sex with children.

Earlier this year, a private member's bill to prosecute in the UK British men who have illegal sex with children abroad, the Sexual Offences Amendment Bill, was presented to Parliament but ran out of time.

Men who travel to the Third World for sex with children argue that these are different cultures with less puritanical attitudes to sexuality. They say there is nothing new in going abroad to escape the moral strictures of home. From the turn of the century, accounts were appearing of the delights of paedophilia in Marrakech.

But these "relaxed cultures" are the ones that place ferocious emphasis on virginity before marriage. And there is no evidence that rich young boys and girls take to prostitution to supplement their pocket money. Prostitution exists in the Third World, as it does here, because of poverty.

WHAT may, a hundred years ago, have been a diversion on the Grand Tour for a tiny number of gentlemen of leisure, has grown into a global industry. As one country clamps down on prostitution, another is opened up, leading to trafficking in child prostitutes between countries, says Anne Badger, of the Coalition on Child Prostitution and Tourism. "They arrive as illegal immigrants and if they are arrested, they will be deported."

Estimates of the number of child prostitutes in Thailand begin at 10,000 and finish at 800,000. When a Bangkok brothel was raided as long ago as 1990, 17 out of 18 girls tested were HIV positive. Nor is there much prospect of any 20-year-olds retiring on their savings. The money goes on cigarettes, glue to sniff and renting motorcycles to ply their trade.

When the media first began to take notice of the Thai sex industry, a television documentary interviewed an American who ran a bar in one of the resorts. He said American men came to Thailand to have sex with children because American women had become too demanding: they wanted sex on equal terms and an equal say in relationships; they wanted to earn their own money. Thai children did not answer back. They understood that to earn their pittance they must do what was asked of them.

Child sex tourism is the equivalent of sexual abuse at home, the exercise of power over the weak. Paedophiles ask in anguish what they are to do with their desires. The answer is what you tell violent men who have desires to hurt people. Repress them.

Green enforcers face ambush in US

If the Republicans get their way, protection of the environment will take second place to the needs of big business, writes **Martin Walker**

OVER the next month, an extraordinary battle for the environment will take place in the US Congress. If the Republicans win it, most of the environmental protections established over the past 30 years will become useless.

The laws will remain on the books but the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be forbidden any public funds to enforce them. The agency itself will see its budget slashed by 35 per cent. It will be barred from setting water quality guidelines in the Great Lakes, from limiting the amount of sewage dumped into rivers, from protecting wetlands, or requiring chemical plants to have plans in the event of an accident.

"This is about shutting us down, there can be no mistake. This is a concerted effort," comments Carol Browner, the EPA adminstrator. "This means our air, our food, our drinking water, the water we fish and swim in, will not be as safe."

The Republicans have other targets. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska will be opened for oil drilling, and the last of the great old-growth forests in Alaska and the north-west will be opened for logging. And so that corporate polluters will be safe from private lawsuits; once the federal inspectors are neutered, a company will be able to avoid penalties for illegal pollution if it simply audits and reports its own problems.

When the Republican Party took control of the House and Senate in January, it promised "to get the government off our backs". The precise meaning of that slogan quickly became clear as Project Relief got to work. A coalition of 115 corporate and industrial lobby groups, it gave $10.3 million to Republican congressional campaigns, targeting key figures such as Congressman Dave McIntosh, chairman of the House Regulatory Affairs committee, and to Alaska's two senators and one congressman who chair the two committees on natural resources. The Republican whip, Tom DeLay, who last month compared the EPA to the Gestapo, was given $38,000.

As stunned Democrats watched in disbelief, Project Relief's lobbyists were invited into the congressional committee rooms and asked to draft the new laws, while the government's own environmental experts were firmly excluded. In the judiciary committee, lawyers from the electricity and water companies were brought in to chair staff meetings that were drafting the regulations for their industries.

Gordon Gooch, who lobbies for the petrochemical industry, drafted the first effort — a moratorium on any new federal regulations of any kind. Paul Smith, who lobbies for car leasing companies, drafted another, which bars the courts from imposing a new clean air requirement on car exhausts.

Rose-Marie Sanders, for the Chemical Manufacturers' Association, secured a provision that deemed chemical companies to be "in statistical compliance" with pollution rules so long as they did not breach them permanently.

There are three separate defences against the Republican majorities in the two Houses of Congress. The first is the presidential veto. But the cuts in the EPA's funds are part of a finance bill which also funds the Veterans' Administration, which President Clinton shrinks from cutting. And in order to get this year's budget funded, Mr Clinton has already swallowed an attached bill allowing the timber companies to invade the formerly protected old-growth forests.

The second defence is in the Senate, where 40 of the 100 senators are enough to delay a bill almost indefinitely. The Democrats just managed to field 41 votes against Senator Dole's bill to scrap environmental regulations last month. But as Congress reconvened earlier this month, centrist Democrats were wavering.

The third defence is new: a grassroots campaign by the various environmental movements to pressure individual Republican congressmen. And so far, this looks to be the most promising. To the surprise of the Republican leadership, the 17 provisions to emasculate the EPA's ability to enforce the environmental laws were defeated — at least for the moment — on a vote of 212-206 last month as 31 Republicans abandoned the party line.

Although some of those votes came from Republican moderates and environmentalists, others bowed to the sharply targeted campaigns being waged in their own constituencies, through the guerrilla media of local talk radio, local newspapers, fax networks and the Internet.

THERE has always been a green lobby in Washington, but the Environmental Information Centre is something new. Backed by all the green organisations, the EIC is a campaigning vehicle which put paid organisers into 17 targeted congressional districts, and spent $1.3 million on ads in their local media. They blanketed the talk radio stations, stressed local issues, such as the impact on nearby lakes and rivers, and then organised blitzes of the congressmen's switchboards to shift their vote.

Their breakthrough was to find an issue which could put Mr Dole's pledge "to ease the costly regulatory burden on industry" into dramatic form. One of Mr Dole's provisions would have eased the inspection regime on meat, and the EIC flew patients suffering from food poisoning to Congress to highlight their objections.

"When people could see that it was a bad meat bill, it became easy to have them oppose it", says EIC director Phil Clapp.

"The bad meat bill gave us the hook we could take into every community," explains the EIC's Peter Kelly. "In Pennsylvania, we could list the rivers and streams that could be closed if another part of this bill went through. Around Lake Michigan, we could name the beaches that had been closed in the past, and would be closed again. In Texas, we could point to the three dead and 37 injured because a chemical plant did not have an accident plan."

The effect of the EIC campaign has been to change the nature of the debate. Instead of loggers losing their jobs because forests were protected as the habitat of spotted owls, which was the Republican argument, the issue has shifted to safe food, air and water.

"The public is more tolerant of environmental regulations than conservatives think," warned the Republican pollster Frank Luntz, as he delivered to Speaker Newt Gingrich his own polls showing 62 per cent thought environmental protection more important then easing regulations on business.

Mr Clinton's own new pollster and political consultant, Dick Morris, delivered similar findings to the White House just before the Clinton family went on their much-publicised holiday to the Yellowstone national park. And having ducked environmental issues throughout the year, Mr Clinton was encouraged to issue his ban a few weeks ago on a new mine being developed on the park's border.

The battle is far from over. As the finance bill now stands, the 35 per cent cut in the budget of the EPA will be carried out, unless Mr Clinton exercises his veto.

The Republican majority leader in the House, Congressman Dick Armey, is retabling the 17 separate provisions which would bar the EPA from enforcing the pollution laws. In the Senate, Mr Dole is still working on the two votes he needs to guillotine debate and pass his Regulation Reform Bill.

The EIC has won a battle, but the odds are still heavily against it as Congress comes back into session and the Republicans turn again to the corporate donors of Project Relief for next year's campaign funds.



Saying it with flowers . . . But pollution from a San Francisco traffic jam can't be disguised PHOTO: JOHN HODDER

They came, they saw, they ate pizza

The colonialists are being colonised. **Deyan Sudjic** on how Europe is being turned into one big theme park

TOURISM used to be something that affluent northern Europeans and North Americans did to other people. They put on brightly coloured clothes and wandered around the world as if it were a zoo, chattering away in front of the natives and scattering sheaves of local currency that they did not need to bother to understand because they could buy so much with their dollars and pounds, confident that they were watching a spectacle mounted entirely for their benefit.

Then their less affluent compatriots joined in, turning much of the coastline of Spain, Greece and Turkey into a convincing replica of the high-rise estates they had left behind.

Tourism is still regarded as a uniquely western form of cultural imperialism, and therefore to be discouraged. Already politically correct hotels are meant to dress up in enough pre-industrial imagery to allow them to claim that they respect local architectural tradition. It's a notion, given that neither the Seychelles nor Thailand had never seen such a thing as a hotel before the second half of the 20th century, that comes perilously close to Marie Antoinette playing at shepherdesses.

But the next cultural clash over tourism isn't going to be on the beaches of Asia or the Costas. It's going to be back in northern Europe, where it all sprang from in the first place.

Last year Britain had 21 million overseas visitors, up from 16 million just five years ago. The Government's latest figures on tourism, released last month, predict another rise of 10 per cent in 1995. It's an increase that will bring the contribution made by tourists to the British economy up to £10 billion, while 1.5 million people now depend on tourism for their jobs. The numbers of visitors are not going to stop growing.

It used to be the United States that provided Britain with its largest contingent of free-spending overseas visitors. The British got used to Americans asking for directions to Fortnum's. But the biggest jump in high-spending new visitors is from Taiwan, Malaysia, Korea and Japan. With Heathrow clogged up with jumbo loads of Koreans, and even the most out of the way Cotswold tea room eager to accept Japanese credit cards, Britain is having to get used to looking at mass tourism from the wrong end of the telescope.

It's a development that will have far-reaching consequences for the whole of Europe. Seen from the outside, particularly from the now dominant economies of the Pacific Rim, Europe is a puzzling place, full of incomprehensible little countries, each with their own language, all squashed absurdly close together, in a way that occurs nowhere else in the world. Its industries, from shipbuilding to computers, are giving up the ghost one by one. Until now it has managed to retain a grip on the service industries, but those, too, will migrate to the Pacific Rim.

Europe's future role is as a theme park the size of an entire continent, attracting millions of newly affluent visitors from the rest of the world to goggle at the ancient crusts of its city centres from Paris and London to Copenhagen and Amsterdam.

Even before the arrival of the mass market Asian tourist, the impact of tourism on Britain has already been dramatic. Look at Windsor, where what was once a thriving country town has seen every shop on its high street turn into a Pizza Hut or a Burger King catering for castle visitors.

The transformation of Britain by tourism is still only just beginning. Just as the first British holidaymakers who ventured to Spain in the 1950s needed constant reassurance to persuade them that abroad wasn't absolutely terrifying, with supplies of tea bags, bitter and chips, so Asian visitors to Britain still come in tightly organised tour groups, scurrying hither and thither in packs following a guide, around the familiar litany of landmarks. The best organised are the Japanese, who publish handy guides to reassure their citizens that British taxi drivers will not be offended by a tip, and that spitting is best avoided. There are even helpful photographs to show what a typical British meal might consist of.

But wait and see what happens to Britain when the Japanese and the Malaysians start treating Wiltshire in the way Peter Mayle treats Provence.

The cutting edge

Colin Luckhurst

WHEN I was moving from the stage of boyhood to acned adolescence, a period in our history which I could place for your illumination in the early 1950s, I used to view my father's morning ablutions with a degree of awe and amazement. It was the shaving ritual which most affected an impressionable mind.

Old Crun (aficionados will immediately recognise a borrowing from the then wildly fashionable Goon Show) gave himself the full treatment. The boldly striped flanelette pyjama jacket and silk dressing gown hung on the back of the bathroom door. He would sharpen the cut-throat razor with extravagant gestures, on a long leather strop. Its flashing open blade would be dexterously deployed over a pink countenance liberally coated with brush-induced lather.

On completion of these arcane rituals he would come downstairs to have — invariably — a full English breakfast washed down with four cups of strong Ceylonese tea, followed by a cigarette and a 10-minute perusal of the News Chronicle (now defunct but once seen by some as the poor man's Manchester Guardian).

He would often draw my attention to the reports of Ritchie Calder, the science correspondent. He would be amused to know how many pints of Guinness, 30 years on, I enjoyed in the company of his son, Angus.

But it was the shaving ritual which most impressed me. Only once, despite an occasional search, have I been shaved in that flashing-blade style by a professional barber. I certainly could not trust myself to handle an open blade, and these days in most men's barber shops — which cut and style hair rather than anything else — a request for a shave would be met with surprise.

Or would it? Tell me if you have a barber who, for whatever sum, does a shave as a regular part of his day's work.

I found one once, on a June morning in 1962, when I was young enough to be abroad with what is now known as designer stubble. It was in the old tin mining village of St Just-in-Penwith. The hot towels, the lather bowl, and the gracefully wielded cut-throat were deployed to send me out on the street shaved and perfumed and smarter than when I walked in.

And yet, in the early years of this century, when working men would be shaved once or twice each week by a barber whose charge was one old pence (240 of which made up £1 in pre-decimalisation days), this income would fund the employment of an apprentice lather boy, and the skills must have been commonplace.

Old Crun would also speak with enthusiasm about the grime-removing properties of a Turkish bath, and I wondered whether they still existed.

I checked the Yellow Pages and found that Turkish baths or Baths — Turkish, are lumped with saunas and solaria. They also come perilously close to the massage-parlour market which I can be reasonably confident was not what Old Crun was referring to in his praise of the Turkish bath. And a serious massage, by which I emphatically do not mean the services offered in massage parlours, would be a great source of comfort to a middle-aged frame which can be heard to creak the morning after a well-contested 18 holes.

Chess Leonard Barden

INTERNATIONAL play becomes ever more competitive. Recently Atalik of Turkey won the Hastings Centenary, while Granda Zuniga of Peru tied with Holland's Jan Timman at the Donner Memorial in Amsterdam.

Arguably the most significant results in both events came from the runners-up. Judit Polgar's attacking verve had enabled her to win her last three games in the Netherlands, and the 19-year-old notched up another 2,700-rating performance.

Polgar is now a dangerous opponent for all but a handful of the top men. Only Kasparov, Kramnik, Anand and Karpov remain clearly too good for her, and they will be vulnerable if she makes the normal youthful improvement before reaching the age of 21.

Here Polgar's zestful style overcomes a Dutch GM:

Judit Polgar-Loek van Wely, Amsterdam 1995

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6?! The question mark is for psychological naivety rather than for any comment on Black's Najdorf variation.

Polgar has won many plaudits in open systems of the Sicilian Defence, so it would be sensible to take her into a game of slow manoeuvres.

6 f4 e6 7 Qf3 Qb6 8 Nb3 Qc7 Nbd7 is more flexible. The sequel shows that Black has miscalculated the flank pawn advances which ensue.

9 g4 b5 10 g5 b4 11 Nb5! axb5 12 gxf6 Nd7 13 Bxb5 gxf6 14 f5! Ke7? Bg7 is a better chance. **15 Bxd7 Bxd7 16 fxe6 fxe6 17 Rf1** Now Bg7 is met by 18 Bh6! **Bb5 18 Qxf6+ Kd7 19 Qxh8 Be7 20 Qxa8 Qc4 21 Qb7+ Ke8 22 Rf2 Bh4 23 Qf7+ Kd8 24 Bg5+! Resigns.** If Bxg5 25 Qg8+ and 26 Qxg5 wins.

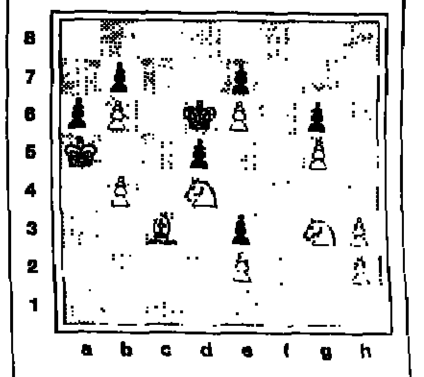
At Hastings, the Cambridge student IMs Jonathan Parker and Matthew Turner were again impressive. Both have performed well in several other events this year and look like potential GMs.

Here, Black acquires two bishops against two knights, then systematically reduces White to inertia.

Russell Dive-Matthew Turner, Hastings 1995

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 d6 5 Bg2 0-0 6 0-0 c6 7 Nc3 Qa5 8 e4 e5 9 a3 Bg4 10 Be3 Qa6 11 Qb3 Nbd7 12 d5 Rfc8 13 Nd2 cxd5 14 cxd5 Nc5 15 Qa2 Bd7 16 Rfc1 Nd3 17 Rc2 Ng4 18 Nf1 Nxe3 19 Nxe3 Bh6 20 Ned1 Nc1 21 Re2 Nxg2 22 Kxg2 f5 23 b3 Qd3 24 Qb2 Rc7 25 f3 Rac8 26 Resigns.

No 2388



White mates in five moves, against any defence (by J Strydom, British Chess Magazine 1995). Five moves so it's hard? Well no, Black has only one legal move in the diagram.

So it's easy? Not exactly, since White has to find a subtle key move.

No 2387: 1 . . . Rf3+ 2 Ng3 h5 3 gxh5 Rf4! 4 Ne2 or Nh1 Rh4+ 5 Kg3 Nf1+ wins the rook.

Bridge Zia Mahmood

GAMBLING held no temptation for the 28 teams who assembled in Las Vegas to contest the US Team Trial. This year, for the first time, the American Contract Bridge League held a full-scale trial to pick the two teams who will represent their country in the World Championships in Beijing next month. An early round threw up this fascinating psychological battle. Take the South hand and decide on your actions:

♠ KQ ♥ KJ10986 ♦ AQJ75 ♣ None

Partner opens the bidding with one spade. You proceed carefully with two hearts, and partner now surprises you with a jump to four clubs. This is a conventional bid, showing short clubs and good heart support. Moreover, you have the partnership agreement that you will not make a jump of this kind with the singleton ace. How would you continue?

Four diamonds and four spades, both cue bids, would be good choices — but I'm going to make you bid 4NT, a kind of Blackwood. Now I know you were taught never to bid Blackwood with a void, but remember your partner's singleton club will not be the ace, so the answer is likely to tell you what you want to know.

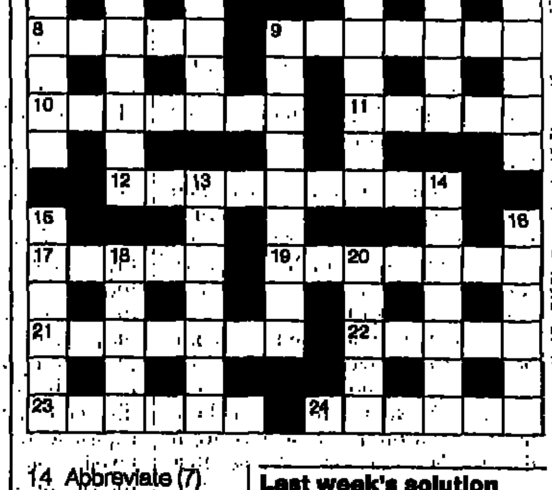
Partner bids five hearts, showing two aces and denying the queen of hearts. You are not worried about that card because he has promised four-card support and the queen is likely to fall during the play. Hoping that partner will produce the king of diamonds, or a six-card spade suit so that you can discard your diamond losers, you go for the jackpot — seven hearts. You pick up your pen to fill in the contract on your score card, when your left-hand opponent asks a question or two about the auction, then doubles! What's happening? Anxiously you await the dummy, but when West leads the ace of clubs, your partner puts down what you had hoped he would produce:

South	North
♠ KQ	♠ AJ10942
♥ KJ10986	♥ A753
♦ AQJ75	♦ 42
♣ None	♣ Q

You ruff the club, but West maintains a poker face. Your doubled grand slam is in danger only if either opponent has the three outstanding hearts. Would West be naïve enough to double a grand slam with a potential trump trick, giving away the position when you might have gone wrong otherwise — or was he relying on the ace of clubs? Perhaps he doubled on a void in trumps, hoping this would cause you to misplay the hand. Did you fool him by bidding Blackwood with a void after all? Is it just a guess which way to play the trumps? At the table, the declarer decided West would never double with three hearts to the queen. So he laid down the ace of hearts. Do you agree with that play?

West is an expert, and he knows you're an expert too. He would never double on an ace alone after you bid Blackwood. That would be an expensive insult should you redouble and make your contract easily. How, then, does he know that your grand slam is not laydown? If he were looking at a heart void, he would have no reason to suppose that you had a problem. Therefore, he is looking at a potential trick in hearts, and has calculated that left to your own devices you will guess the suit correctly at least half the time. He is trying a kind of double bluff, defying you to believe that anyone would be so foolish as to give away the trump position by doubling. You must play West for the three missing trumps and lay down the king first. That was what you decided — wasn't it? ©

Quick crossword no. 280



Across

1 Nearly (6)
4 Master (anag) — current (6)
8 Supple (5)
9 Male witch (7)
10 Serious (7)
11 In front (5)
12 Shedding leaves annually (9)
17 African snake (5)
19 Ratify (7)
21 Dictionary (7)
22 Recorded — as well known? (5)
23 Mutter (6)
24 Artillery piece (6)

Down

1 Confederate (6)
2 Ripened (7)
3 Blockade (5)
5 Cyclone (7)
6 Eat away (5)
7 Japanese emperor (6)
9 Taken back — though retired? (9)
13 Clergy's area of the church (7)
14 Abbreviate (7)
15 Symbol (6)
16 Sinew (6)
18 Saw — a type of gun (5)
20 Bear cat (5)

Last week's solution

A Feast of Faust

THEATRE
Michael Billington

GOETHE'S Faust is not so much a play as a Wagnerian *gesamtkunstwerk:* a piece of total theatre combining words, music, mime and visual spectacle. And, while Michael Bogdanov's six-and-a-half hour production of Howard Brenton's new version at The Swan in Stratford-upon-Avon has inevitable longueurs and seems unable to embrace Goethe's concluding optimism, it is still a powerful theatrical event: proof that the RSC is often at its best when dealing with the impossible.

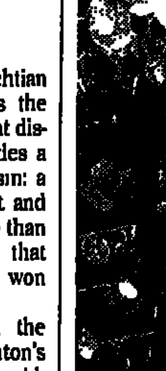
Bogdanov and Brenton recognise that Goethe's work, written over 60 years from 1773 to 1831, is the antithesis of Marlovian tragedy. It's less about the battle between good and evil than that between activity and passivity, faith and nihilism. Faust's bargain is that he will grant the devil his soul if he can find a moment of happiness he would wish to last an eternity. In Part One he explores the "small" world of desire and passion. In Part Two he enters the "great" world of history, politics and culture. And in the end he's saved by what George Steiner called "an act of Rousseauist benevolence": a land-reclamation project envisioning a new society.

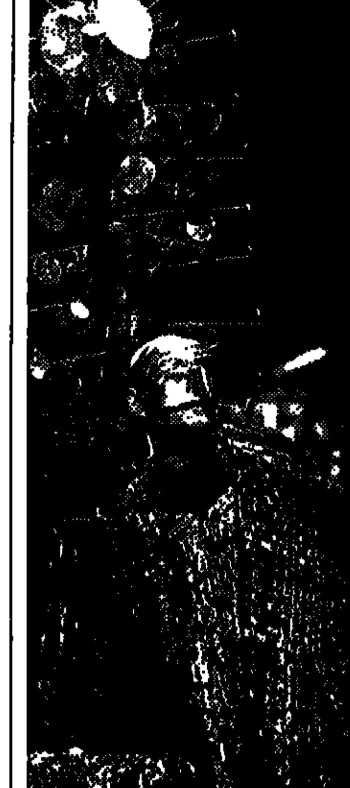
This new version, set in the modern world, acknowledges the dialectic within the play: Faust's hunger for experience encounters what Brenton's Mephistopheles calls his own "creative cosmic negativity". But Bogdanov and Brenton seem unable to accept Goethe's progressive optimism. The land-reclaiming Faust of the final scenes is played as a Dr Strangelove-type madman. And his redemption in which he is borne heavenwards to the music of angelic choirs is played, after an onstage argument between the "director" and the "poet", in a style of Brechtian irony. This obviously violates the spirit of Goethe's original. What disturbs me more is that it exudes a wholly contemporary pessimism: a belief that social improvement and religious salvation are no more than a romantic dream and that Mephistophelian nihilism has won the day.

I prefer Goethe's faith in the future to Bogdanov and Brenton's present-day despair. But, that said, the translation is vigorous, colloquial and often very funny: a smug burger, for instance, announces that "It's a definition of civilisation to walk in the park on a Sunday and talk of far-away atrocities".

Bogdanov and his designer, Chris Dyer, combine earthbound banality with airborne journeys into space. There is something deliberately tacky about the localised encounters so that the Leipzig tavern is like a grotty English pub and *Walpurgisnacht* a joyless, suburban, black-leather S&M party. But immortal visions are revealed through a tilted upstage mirror and the Pharsalian fields suggested through mythical figures gyrating on trapezes.

But a long day is sustained by Bogdanov's visual inventiveness and by two major central performances. Michael Feast's Faust marvellously captures the character's transformation from dusty don to rejuvenated, white-suited lover and wide-eyed time-traveller: he also speaks the language with a bile and authority that constantly compels attention. Hugh Quarshie plays Mephistopheles as a cool dude in a natty suit and cunningly suggests the spiritual emptiness under urban sophistication. And there is first-rate support from Sophie Heyman as a knowing Gretchen, from Josie Lawrence as a sumptuous Helen of Troy and from the whole of a sinuously athletic and sexy company.





A man transformed . . . Feast as Faust PHOTO: HENRIETTA BUTLER

Botho Strauss's **The Park** at London's Barbican is a Teutonic variant on A Midsummer Night's Dream. First seen in Germany in 1983, it is a quite extraordinary and enigmatic work, using Shakespeare's magic, unfathomable comedy both as a frame of reference and as a means of criticising modern German society.

Strauss's technique is to hurl lots of scenes at us, gradually allowing a Shakespearean pattern to emerge. Titania and Oberon turn up in the titular park as immortal flashers arguing that human beings have to rediscover passion and desire. Shakespeare's lovers are turned into quarrelling bourgeois couples fatally mismatched. Puck becomes an artist turning out tiny talismanic figurines. Even the fairies are present as tow-headed punks and the mechanicals as a pair of identical businessmen.

I take it Strauss's starting point is the materialism of pre-unification western Germany. He seems to be saying that if such a society, obsessed with getting and spending and the elimination of the spiritual, were to fall prey to a work of art like Shakespeare's Dream, it would not know what had hit it. But beyond that he implies that the whole of western society is starved of myth and magic and reduces death as well as desire to the level of banality.

As long as Strauss sticks close to the framework of the Dream, his play is telling and cogent. Oberon argues fiercely that human instincts have been eroded by self-consciousness and the need to make a living. The lovers find that their partners undergo a drastic change of character once they are married.

The problem is that Strauss piles one myth on another, which strips his play of its driving purpose. But, although I find much of the play totally baffling, I still think Strauss is an important dramatist and that the Royal Shakespeare Company is right to present his work. The ubiquitous Jeremy Sams has also produced a sparky translation and, as both designer and director, David Fielding stages it with great skill.

The actors play with great zest. Louise Jameson is a fine shape-changing Titania, Adrian Lukis as Oberon is gauntly impatient with humanity's thin-bloodedness and, among the lovers, Simon Dormandy as a yuppy lawyer appalled by his wife's racism and Tessa Peake-Jones as a *hausfrau* who suddenly finds herself the object of everyone's lust are both outstanding.

"Did you understand all that or were you just vaguely listening?" is the play's resonant final line. I listened hard, I did not comprehend it all but at least I felt I had had a theatrical experience.

The man with 87 silent telephones

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

MICHAEL WINNER sat beside a large sheaf of florist's flowers and a silent phone, waiting for a call from a close friend. "In my case," he said, "it might be someone you really enjoy chatting with like Marlon Brando or Charles Bronson or, when he was alive, Orson Welles." Neither Brando nor Bronson called while we there.

Well, since you ask, no one called at all though there are 87 phones on nine different numbers in Toad Hall which, as Mr Winner did not fail to remind us, has 46 rooms. It must be quite difficult to avoid calling him even by accident. "We have them in all the lavatories. We have them in the swimming pool. We have them near the jacuzzi and the steam room. We have them liberally spread."

I had dawdled behind the group, gawping at the lavatory, wondering why it was on that wall. Handy if you were standing up; less so if you were sitting down. Evidently the phones are for Mr Winner's convenience. So to speak.

He has no answering machine. He has servants for that. *It's For You — The Life And Times Of The Telephone* (BBC2) is one of those modest, little series just bulging with rowdy characters, who bounce out at you like bullfrogs when you open the box. Bridget Rowe, editor of the People, specialises in what she describes as 24-carat bollocking ("I've only broken three phones.") She is closely related to Vi'let Elizabeth Bott, who scweamed and scweamed if cwossed. "Hello? I am getting really pissed off here! If you've got one, I'm bloody having one!"

Margaret from Leeds comes out at night like a bat and gets in the hair of radio phone-in hosts. James H Reeve was on the receiving end of Margaret's theory that men never went to the moon. "It's a right con, kid, innit? You see something shining in the sky and you call it a moon. You don't know whether it's there or not, do yah?" Reeve said: "That's a very Cartesian approach to take." He had started to cover his eyes with his hand.

Margaret's voice sounds like a large delivery of nutty slack. The phone seems almost superfluous. What I would really like to do is give Margaret from Leeds Michael Winner's number. I'm sure he'd like to hear about the moon. He could tell Brando.

If she would care to call me?

***Off Your Trolley With Loyd Grossman* (BBC2), a tell-tale tour of supermarkets, offered such incidental delights along the way as a brainstorming design session to design the packaging of a luxury tart. ("Persuade the customers that tonight is the night!") It was decided to "Have the tart in a meadow." My own feeling is, that a meadow may do for your common-or-garden tart but a luxury tart will insist on a duplex apartment.**

A quiet revolutionary

Andrew Clements talks to the founding father of minimalism, composer Steve Reich

THERE'S just a handful of living composers who can legitimately claim to have altered the direction of musical history, and Steve Reich is one of them. Conventionally, American Minimalism had three founding fathers — Philip Glass, Terry Riley and Reich — but it was Reich who from the start gave the movement its real substance and radical integrity.

The way in which the three composers have evolved since the heady days of "pure" minimalism only underlines the hierarchy. All of them have moved on, more or less, from the hardline systems music that made their names in the 1960s and 1970s — Riley has drifted off into a soft, quasi-mystical musical world of West Coast idealism, Glass has taken on more and more grandiose schemes that require ever more grandiose rhetorical posturing, while Reich has continued to explore worlds that are as rich, inventive and seriously musical as ever.

Reich was always the minimalist whose sheer musicality and intellectual seriousness transcended the limitations of the movement for which he carried the banner.

Now aged 59, Reich has never lost his intellectual curiosity, never been content to repeat himself, or to rework a successful formula for the sake of box-office success.

Reich began the move away from the burgeoning complexity that had characterised music since the end of the second world war and back towards a language that was simpler and more direct. It was, he claims, just a matter of following his own instincts. "I was very self-consciously involved with a limited number of musical ideas and crusading for them, and then I realised there was only a small group of people who had a similar persuasion. When I made the decision to go in this direction, it was a gut reaction, a return to the kind of music I had loved — jazz, Bach, Stravinsky — in the face of serialism."

That was the early 1960s, and over the next decade Reich carved out the musical world that was so distinct and so subversive. "I get bored; I can't go back to the same subject matter either musically or programmatically. To get my juices going it has to be something new."

Drumming, made in 1971, was the culmination of that development, drawing on all Reich's technical skill in creating and manipulating phase patterns as well as his research into African drumming to create a work that remains the masterpiece of "pure" minimalism. But it was also a turning point: "At the end of Drumming I thought I'd had enough of this. It was always in the back of my mind that these pieces weren't my private property, though they were temporarily, and I didn't want to be in a private ghetto as far as performance practice was concerned."

The series of works Reich has produced over the last 20 years, since he began to loosen up the rigours of minimalism with his Music For Eighteen Musicians ("The biggest success I'd had at that time, the most appealing work in a conventional sense") is as distinguished as anything produced on either side of the Atlantic in the same period.

THAT development has taken him into the world of sampling, and into his own brand of music theatre. The Cave, staged around Europe and the US two years ago, was a virtuoso piece of audio-visual work using live musicians and elaborate video collages created by Reich's wife Beryl Korot, and examining part of his Jewish inheritance.

That background, most affectingly explored in Different Trains, seems to play an ever greater part in his music; the tradition to which he belongs, he seems to be saying, is not just that of western art, but a much wider one, which is likely to have enormous implications for music in the next 20 years.

At the Royal Albert Hall last week, the central panel of the prom given by the superb Ensemble Modern sandwiched a pair of works by Reich between two remarkable Parisian ballets of the 1920s, George Antheil's Ballet Mecanique and Stravinsky's Les Noces. There was another outing for Reich's City Life and the premiere of a BBC commission, Proverb.

The new piece is a work in progress. He uses five singers and pairs of vibraphones and electric organs. The starting point was the organum of Perotin and the 12th century Notre Dame School, though the result is not at all archaic. The sound is crystalline and wonderfully lucid, though a little unvaried in its present unfinished state.

In Proverb Reich returns to "pure" musical sources, temporarily forsaking his use of sampling techniques and melodies based upon speech patterns. City Life is the most sophisticated example of that style so far, as the instrumental ensemble is infiltrated by the urban sound bites controlled by a pair of keyboards. The music is typically adroit and rhythmically inventive though the array of impure sounds — the car horns and alarms, the pile driver and street cries — muddies the textures in a way that is uncharacteristic of Reich. Proverb reminds us how acute and exceptional his ear really is.

Installing a grand master

Robert Wilson, the cult director, is going to jail for a month. He explains why to **Lynn MacRitchie**



Sound of silence . . . Robert Wilson outside the Clink Street vaults in London PHOTOGRAPH: E HAMILTON WEST

THERE is a vast warren of derelict cellars beneath the railway arches near Southwark cathedral. Once they housed the medieval prison, the Clink, but for the next month they are the site of HG, an installation by the creator of some of the most influential theatrical productions this century.

It is the first new work the American artist/director Robert Wilson has ever made in Britain. In sheer scale alone, this collaboration with sound and light specialist Hans Peter Kuhn and production designer Michael Howells is a major event.

Wilson is very tall and stands straight but slightly awkwardly, his slimness making him seem delicate. He speaks quietly, eyes often turned down or at least away from a direct gaze. Sometimes, he will leap to his feet, illustrating a point with a gestural fierceness that belies the buttoned-down feel of the neat jacket and jeans, the careful glasses. It is the same figure that was caught on video 20 years ago, dancing, twisting and turning like a man possessed, before the blazing neon numbers of the set of his opera Einstein On The Beach. He wears his 54 years lightly.

"I never really liked the theatre or the opera — in fact I still don't," he smiles wryly, feigning embarrassment at the admission. This, after all, is the director whose triumphant rendition of Bartok's Bluebeard and Schoenberg's Erwartung premiered at the Salzburg Festival last month.

Coming to New York as a student from his home town of Waco, Texas, in the sixties, Wilson hated the Broadway shows, repelled by their busyness, their fussy activity that "just didn't connect with me".

But the future director was enchanted by dance — Balanchine at first, then Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. Their dancers "did not demand attention — they let me go to them". Their disciplined choreography and careful use of stage space allowed him "to see the dance and to hear the music" and, most importantly, while watching and listening, "to have my own thoughts".

In making his own early performances, Wilson was strongly influenced by a childhood blighted by a severe stammer. He was cured at 17 by a local dancing teacher who taught him to release the tension in his body through movement and to speak slowly.

He also drew on his experience with autistic and brain-damaged children. He became the guardian of Raymond Andrews, an 18-year-old black deaf mute, whose drawings provided source material for his first international success, Deafman Glance, 1970. Wilson explains: "He would notice things such as the gestures we are both making now," (he indicates our postures at the table) "which I had not noticed because I had been distracted by words." Making people notice gesture — at first by showing it very, very slowly, or repeating it endlessly, and nowadays most likely by the use of lighting — has remained a key Wilson device.

Language itself he first dispensed with altogether. But when Christoper Knowles, an autistic boy of 14, sent him a tape, he was fascinated.

Knowles began to perform with Wilson, and his writings formed part of the libretto for Einstein On The Beach, the opera with music by Phillip Glass premiered in 1976, which is considered the masterpiece of the minimalist aesthetic of New York in the seventies and is still a recognisable influence on performance and theatre work to this day.

Since directing Medée for the Opera de Lyon in 1984, the man who once refused to direct others' texts because he declared he "knew nothing about theatre" has become one of the most sophisticated theatrical artists of our time.

Inevitably in over 20 years the rapture which greeted his early pieces — Louis Aragon described Deafman as "the miracle we have been waiting for" — has faded. Some critics now claim his work has not developed, that it merely repeats his earlier innovations as an increasingly stale bag of tricks.

However, such claims seem particularly harsh as his greatest work, conceived to be performed in conjunction with the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 and produced in co-operation with theatres in Europe and Japan, was never completed because the US funding fell through.

A piece based on Grimm's fairy-tales done in Munich in 1994 began, as his very first works had done, in silence. "But I do silence differently now," he says. Differently, because of the 17 times he went to see Marlene Dietrich in Paris (he loved the way she sang standing so still); because of the Noh plays he has seen in Japan; because of his talks with a young Chinese actress in Shanghai who knew 500 ways to manipulate the sleeve of her robe.

Clinks of light

THROUGH a nondescript door on Clink Street marked only by a small brass plaque, you enter the world of HG, an installation conceived by American theatre director and performer Robert Wilson and his collaborator, sound and light architect Hans Peter Kuhn, *writes Lyn Gardner*.

HG begins in 1895, in a small dining room stuffed with the paraphernalia of Victorian living. The candles still burn and mutton chops and peas congeal on the plates.

Onwards and downwards into the subterranean, labyrinthine passages of the vaults with their surprising, cathedral-like spaces. Suddenly from out of the dark emerges a series of images: a yowling cat caught in the sweeping arc of a searchlight; an alabaster hand suspended in space, a decomposing mummy bathed in a shaft of natural light like molten lava, flowers strewn over his sad, dusty face.

In another area there is row upon row of harshly lit, metal hospital beds. A piano scale plays softly in the background. Look through iron bars in a prison door and you glimpse a rainforest alive with sound and movement.

There is much more going on here than merely a series of objects and tableaux beautifully arranged and prettily lit. Wilson and Kuhn create images that ache with resonance for any audience familiar with Western culture and living in the latter half of the 20th century. Who can look at hundreds of pairs of labelled shoes without thinking of their wearers, of the world's disappeared, of those stripped of their personal belongings and exterminated in a puff of smoke?

What Wilson and Kuhn achieve is the personalisation of history, distilling it from something vast and unfathomable into something intensely personal.

Glimpse of the inner Clint

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

AT LAST, a Hollywood film for grown-ups. Clint Eastwood's version of Robert James Waller's critically sniffed-at but immensely popular The Bridges Of Madison County is not only a good deal better than the book but one of the few starry films we've seen over the past few months that dares to assume a modicum of intelligence in its audience.

Eastwood, as he proved in Unforgiven, is an accomplished director with a few commercially dangerous new thoughts in his head. That said, this story of a four-day romance between a married country woman and a veteran roving photographer isn't perfect.

There are moments when it drifts ominously, and at 135 minutes it is too long. But it still manages to distill its argument about an unexpected and late love, and the painful choices that have to be made with clarity and dramatic force. And the calm direction allows both central performances, from Eastwood and Meryl Streep, to flourish.

Although it is not quite like anything we have seen from Eastwood before, it does connect with his his first directorial effort, Play Misty For Me.

Eastwood's Robert Kincaid, arriving in the fall of 1965 in Madison County, Iowa, to take pictures for the National Geographic of the Roseman and Holliwell covered bridges, is not a man looking for romance but an introverted loner somehow scenting that Streep's contentedly married Italian-American, whose husband and children are away at the Illinois state fair, is as unfulfilled as he is.

If the book was about sex, the film is about the kind of affection and companionship that doesn't preclude it but which is often more important. It is also about the idea that some things come too late and thus have to be terminated.

There are very few points of over-emphasis, and even fewer of the conventional Hollywood schlock that insists upon underscoring what is already there.

If you set a film in Neasden, it is all too likely to be a comedy, such are the associations with the name. It certainly is in the case of Benjamin Ross's The Young Poisoner's **Handbook**. But this is a comedy with a decidedly hard edge. Despite a resemblance to Kind Hearts And Coronets, clearly Neasden and Ealing are rather different places.

It is the sixties, and the Young family are not best pleased with 14-year-old Graham's experiments with his chemistry set. Father is a moralising hypocrite, step-mother a disciplinarian and sister Winnie is simply insufferable. They perhaps deserve chocolates laced with poison, medicine mixed with antimony and belladonna in the eyewash. But when death results, not surprisingly Graham is sent to a mental hospital for the criminally insane.

THERE, Dr Zeigler misdiagnoses Graham's pathology. Parole beckons after eight years, but Graham is cleverer than the society he is determined to damage, even if fate decrees a nasty ending.

Ross's feature debut is freshly imagined — funny-peculiar rather than funny-ha-ha — and contains a very good performance from Hugh O'Conor as the obsessed Graham.

The problem is the delicate one of making us laugh and shiver at more or less the same time. Neither Grand Guignol nor quite farce, it moves into the area inhabited so brilliantly by David Lynch. What the film lacks, though, is the sense of seriousness that, say, Blue Velvet achieved.

Yet there are many pluses, such as the good doctor Antony Sher, labouring under the delusion of his own cleverness, and Ruth Sheen and Roger Lloyd Pack who provide wonderful caricatures of Neasden denizens.

Carl Prechezer's **Blue Juice** is an even more open attempt to make a commercial British film. Alas, it doesn't succeed as well since this story of a veteran surfer (Sean Pertwee) in Cornwall dreaming of previous glories, while his girl (Catherine Zeta Jones) wants to settle down, is hardly a companion piece to John Milius's Big Wednesday.

More like Limp Monday actually, as Pertwee's bad back prevents him satisfying his would-be mate, despite having cream pasted all over him, before the arrival of three younger friends from London present him with even worse problems.

Though it is amiable enough and makes a decent attempt to reach the multiplex generation, the narrative drive is at low tide throughout and nobody seems anything but exceptionally dim. Even the surfing is at a premium, and the result constantly promises more than it achieves.

Wong Kar-Wai's **Chungking Express** is also about the trials and tribulations of the young, but it is altogether more convincing because it doesn't try nearly so hard for spurious relevance.

Shot by the extraordinarily good Australian cinematographer Christopher Doyle on the streets of Hong Kong, it tells two stories about young policemen who patronise the Midnight Express snack bar — the first a plain-clothes man chasing a suspect, pining for his absconding girl and falling in love with a woman in a blonde wig who turns out to be a drug dealer.

This is crazy and fast-paced enough to be highly watchable but the second story, in which another cop loses his air hostess girl and gets caught up in an odd one-way relationship with an adoring bar attendant, is the more substantial.

Wong Kar-Wai, the director of Days Of Being Wild and Ashes Of Time, may not be the Godard of his time as Quentin Tarantino has claimed, but he is a director of invention and resource, who is able to illustrate haphazard lives with empathy.

Chungking Express is a wonderfully accurate portrait of Hong Kong, and its cast of established stars (Tony Leung and Brigitte Lin) and singers debuting as actors (Faye Wong and Takeshi Kaneshiro) is an excellent mix.

Hell's architect

Martin Gilbert

Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth
by Gitta Sereny
Macmillan 732pp £25

THIS BOOK is a disturbing one. The author, Gitta Sereny, whose study of the Nazi mass murderer Franz Stangl is a classic of investigative writing, now devotes more than 700 pages to Albert Speer, one of those indicted for war crimes at Nuremberg and sentenced to 20 years in Spandau. In studying him, Sereny befriended him, trying to enter his mind and perspective.

Much of the fascination of this book lies in the way in which Speer himself tried, after the war, to create his own version of wartime events. Through his writings and interviews, and during his many meetings with Sereny, he put the case for his innocence of any wrong-doing, for his lack of knowledge of what was happening around him, and for his ignorance of what his close friends were doing.

Those close friends included Dr Karl Brandt, one of the main creators of the Nazi euthanasia and medical experiment programmes. "By all accounts, he was a fine surgeon and an attractive man with a first-class mind," Sereny writes. Yet, by his own admission, Brandt organised the murder of 60,000 so-called "insane people", almost all of them Germans, and Speer was his close friend during the height of his evil activities. Speer told Sereny: "Well, I knew nothing of that part of his activities. I just knew that he was in charge of the Reich medical services."

Sereny calls Speer "this deeply ambivalent man". The man who emerges from her pages indeed seems to have been perpetually evasive about the war years. He is still best known to historians as Hitler's favourite architect. In 1937, at 32, he was appointed Inspector-General for the Construction of Berlin, with the rank of a State Secretary and entitled to sit on the government benches in the Reichstag. He was Hitler's friend and his building plans


Albert Speer (second from left) listening to Hitler's plans for a new building in Weimer, 1936

met with Hitler's admiration. At the height of the second world war, Speer was appointed Reichsminister for Armaments and Munitions. He it was who manufactured the weapons on which the survival of Nazidom depended. It was Speer's ministry which directed the vast concourse of slave labour through which the manufacture of arms was maintained.

On the question of Speer and the Jews, Sereny quotes from a letter which Speer wrote to his daughter in 1953, in which he stated: "My conscience is entirely clear in that I never took any part in anti-Semitic activities or made anti-Semitic remarks." But she also quotes from a letter which his brother Hermann wrote to him 20 years later: "I remember you telling me in 1938 that you had suggested to Himmler to set up brickworks in Oranienburg for the reconstruction of Berlin. And jokingly, you pointed out a precedent: 'After all,' you said with that total cynicism you habitually manifested towards moral problems, 'the Jews already made bricks under the Pharaohs'."

In mitigation, Sereny points out that while the story "rings true enough", nevertheless, because it comes from 1938, "it is, of course, irrelevant to any knowledge of the eventual fate of the Jews". It is relevant, however, to the letter to his daughter; and even in 1938 the conditions in the concentration camps, of which Oranienburg was one, and the closest one to Berlin, were widely known to be harsh in the extreme.

This question of knowledge is a central theme of Sereny's explorations. Speer's general attitude to Jews is evasive. Sereny finds a clue in the letter to his daughter, from which Sereny herself italicises this sentence: "I really had no aversion to them, or rather, no more than the slight discomfort all of us sometimes feel when in contact with them."

SERENY makes many efforts to explain the qualities and dilemmas of Albert Speer. "Few men could have been closer to Hitler than Speer," she writes in a section dealing with Nazi crimes against the Jews. And she goes on to ask what did Speer know, what could he have known, what should his reactions have been? The reader is then led into a deep tunnel of explanations which, given Speer's own evasions, seems oddly unconvincing in the end.

In 1943, Speer wrote to Himmler offering to provide 2,500 tons of structural steel for various construction purposes in "the concentration camps, particularly Auschwitz". Although Sereny questions Speer closely about several similar documents, she does not seem to have asked him about this one. If she did, she does not give us his answer.

Sereny was not unwilling to question Speer. Far from it. But his answers to the difficult questions sound as evasive for the reader as they did to her. When she questioned him about a letter he wrote to Himmler, in which Speer referred to "the evacuation of about 40,000 Jews" from the ghettos of the Bialystok region, he replied: "Do you think that I personally drafted all my letters?"

To her final probe, whether this letter would have provoked questions in his mind had he read it, Speer answered: "I'm afraid not. I'm afraid I really wouldn't have cared. My mind was entirely on getting labour, on keeping production going. If anything, however illogically, I would have associated the removal of these Jews with the needs for security, and for labour."

"These Jews" were sent to their deaths. Speer was released from prison, wrote his autobiography, and is now the subject of a book in which he makes every effort to explain why he might not have known very much about any of the nastier things that were going on around him.

Speer did indeed, after the war, write about a report he had received in 1943 of the "catastrophic sanitary conditions in Auschwitz which really did alarm me". But even about this he was not questioned by the author. Despite so much hard work and detailed research on Sereny's0 part, her book still left this reviewer with a strange sense of incompleteness.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

A Frolic of His Own, by William Gaddis (Penguin, £7.99)

ARE WE so decadent that we regard novels written beyond the narrative conventions of Dick and Jane as "difficult"? So it would seem. But George V Higgins writes most of his prose in dialogue, too, and James Ellroy's gnarled cadences are awfully hip; so why is Gaddis unread? The continuous sense of being in the presence of a superior mind, perhaps. Try this, a hilarious, intense satire of the US legal system.

A Man of Mystery and Other Stories, by Shiva Naipaul (Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics, £6.99)

PERFECTLY-FORMED tragi-comic stories about the Trinidadian condition: as seen by Shiva Naipaul, this involves picking one's teeth and trying to improve oneself or get out of there, often at the risk of destroying one's happiness. Archetypal line, delivered after a feckless husband announces he's been thinking: "Thinking! . . . Be careful, man. I sure it not good for you."

My Mother — Madame Edward and The Dead Man, by Georges Bataille, trs Austryn Wainhouse (Marion Boyars, £9.95)

THE lead story, really a novella, in this collection is about the narrator's incestuous relationship with his ma, and opens up disturbing vistas of solipsism, madness and decadence, the kind of stuff that led Yukio Mishima to conclude, in his introductory essay, "God is an idler, an immovable whore lain on a bed".

Rushing to Paradise, by J G Ballard (Flamingo, £5.99)

ISN'T this timely? As we always suspected, satirists are in fact prophets. A Greenpeace-type ship sails to a Pacific atoll to prevent French weapons tests, gets horribly duffed up by the navy . . . but this is only the beginning of a spiral of Lord Of The Flies-type nastiness. The point, and I am sure Ballard hates to rain on your parade like this, is that evil does not always wear a uniform.

Introducing Modern Music, by Otto Karolyi (Penguin, £9.99)

THE ordinary music-lover — reasonably familiar with standard notes and staves — tends to panic when confronted with music which, when written down, looks as though it has been produced by a Spirograph. An elegant, comprehensible introduction to modern classical form in, to use Stravinsky's words (in praise of Webern) — "a deaf world of ignorance and indifference".

Slender girls with short careers

Eve MacSweeney

Model: The Ugly Business of Beautiful Women
by Michael Gross
Bantam 454pp £17.99

POPULAR culture has a short memory, and the cult of the supermodel that we've all had rammed down our throats would have us believe it a new phenomenon. The American journalist Michael Gross, in an ambitious and lengthy study of the history of modelling, corrects this impression, along with its supposedly recent attributes of anorexia promoting, pubescent, drug-fuelled, promiscuous, overpaid and overly celebrated stars.

Models have always been stars, and often big, first-name ones at that, written up in the press and circled by playboys like hungry flies. It's good to see the great character-models of the thirties to the fifties — Dovima, Lisa Fonssagrives, Carmen dell'Orefice and Suzy Parker — given their due in this book, along with their more recent counterparts.

Nancy Berg, a model in the fifties, describes how she didn't sleep for 10 years, thanks to "a red liquid called 'The Doctor' " — pure speed; others avow to drinking heavily, and many confess, quite unrepentantly, their many sexual opportunities, which, as Gross puts it, they were often only too happy to "shag along with". Even the money, exhaustively recorded here, sounds pretty good from the start.

Perhaps it's the pace at which names are made in modelling, and the consequent need to get his book out before the current stars fall, that accounts for the frequent sloppiness of Gross's style, which reads at times like badly stitched word processing with repetitions and overused words (Gross's models are always "bouncing" — from town to town and man to man).

Gross, meanwhile, bounces from documenting the first model agencies, photographers, magazine life, fashion waves and an increasingly competitive international business to monologues from a series of models.

In the early days, Powers Girls such as Sherman (represented by the first true model agent, John Robert Powers) carried their accessories in a signature hatbox — until prostitutes caught on to the gimmick and the models had to stop. The line between models and call girls weaves in and out of this history. Often grossly unjustified; other times it's startlingly and plausibly not so.

Christian Dior, we learn, though gay, would find his models in bordellos which he visited for the atmosphere. "The girls became models and clients. They knew men with money. They'd go to Cannes, Monte Carlo and Deauville for dirty weekends. They had to have their suit from Chanel, their cocktail ensemble from Dior, their evening dress from Fath. Then they'd marry an English duke and need still more clothes."

Gross treats models with respect, not least in that he doesn't paint them as straightforward victims. For nearly every photographer out to get his leg over a model, he suggests, there's a model on the make. And the fact that agenting creates money-grubbing sharks does mean that the models were having their fees constantly hoiked up — even if they did blow them on cocaine and limousines.

The infighting and manoeuvring of agents are charted here in far too much detail for even the most ardent fashion student to follow. Running through the book are the stories of the two biggest and most rivalrous houses: the formidable Eileen Ford and her more benign husband Jerry, of the Ford agency, a prudish mom and pop of fashion, and the more sexually motivated John Casablancas, of Elite, who eventually joined forces with his arch enemy, the equally testosterone-charged Gérald Marie, for some years the husband of Linda Evangelista.

If Gross refers to the language of horse-trading and, frequently, to the models as "meat", the tragedies that occur on these pages are mostly extraneous — mental illness, cancer, bad luck in love (though this last could be said to be a side effect of modelling).

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Tales from the lost city

James Wood

The Moor's Last Sigh
by Salman Rushdie
Cape 437pp £15.99

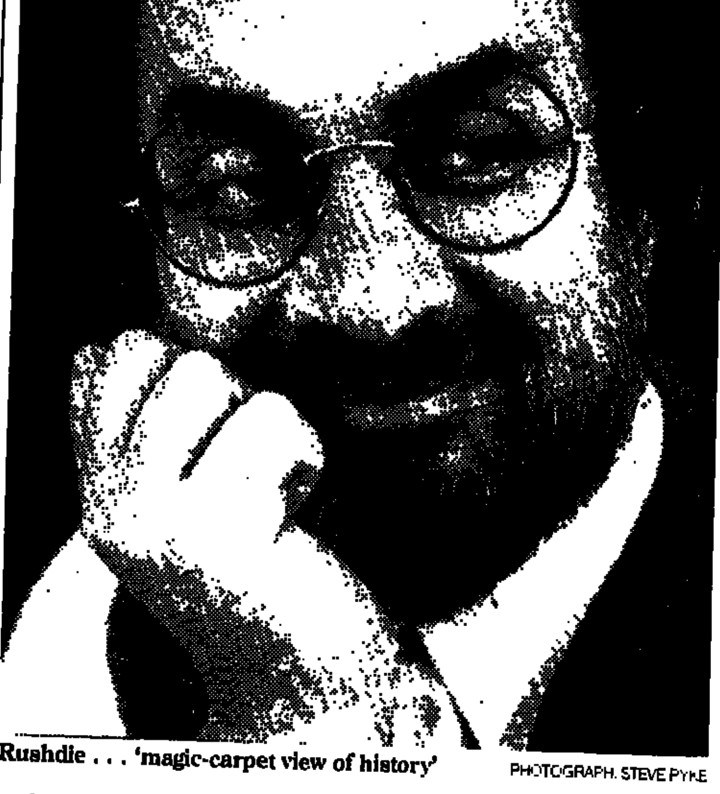
MACAULAY announced in 1835 that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature" of India. How, in this century, Macaulay has been paid back by Indian literature for that untruth; he has been pelted with masterpieces. Salman Rushdie quotes Macaulay in his new novel, and this astoundingly abundant book, with its allusions to Shakespeare, Kipling and Conrad, surely joins the vengeful Indian ordnance, compressing within its 400 dancing pages at least a shelf of damp English stories.

Actually, Rushdie's rich family saga has a certain English comic madness. The tale of a doomed 20th-century Indian-Portuguese-Spanish trading empire built on the export of pepper has Wellsian vigour, recalling the doomed medicinal empire in Tono-Bungay. Rushdie's narrator, Moraes Zogoiby, celebrates and fights "the ridiculous and ludicrous perversity of my family". The family members talk to each other like Wodehouse characters playing games with Hobson-Jobson.

This perversity is deliberately zealous; along with the family's mixed-race lineage, it seems to constitute a secular, postmodern virtue for Rushdie: the family nuttiness represents the carnival that breaks the liturgy, the free-floating nomadism that spills over frontiers and barriers. Moraes is bereft but proudly dissolved: "I was a nobody from nowhere, like no one, belonging to nothing." This stateless exuberance funds the novel's chief delights, as Moraes paddles in his bag of memory and tells us the stories of his ancestors.

Moraes begins at the end of the 19th century, with his great-grandfather of Portuguese descent, Francisco da Gama, who, with his young French architect, builds two extraordinary wooden houses on his new Indian plot of ground. Every so often, he tells his family at breakfast that today they are "moving east" or "going west", "whereupon the whole household had no choice but to move lock, stock and barrel into one or another of the Frenchman's follies". His son, Camoens — Moraes's grandfather — develops an obsession during the Russian Revolution with building an acting troupe of Lenin lookalikes; he has a love of English poetry and of Nehru, though he resists the country's burgeoning Hindu fundamentalism. Attending one of Gandhi's early rallies, he complains that the movement is trying to make Hinduism monotheistic by deifying the God Ram (or "Battering Ram" as he calls it): "with that God stuff I got scared. In the city we are for secular India but the village is for Ram."

At the novel's centre is a marvellous portrait of Moraes's mother, Aurora, a painter, activist and darkly beautiful socialite, who falls in love


Rushdie . . . 'magic-carpet view of history' PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE PYKE

at the age of 15 with the company's lowly warehouse manager, Abraham Zogoiby. Abraham is not only a Jew, but a Jew with a suspiciously Arab name; he later finds out that he is the bastard product of an Arabic-Jewish dalliance. Aurora, the young bloom of an Indian Catholic family, marries him, and under Abraham's ruthless guidance, the spice empire becomes one of India's largest corporations — the novel ends with the 90-year-old Abraham, now a corporate magnate perched diabolically at the top of his vast I M Pei skyscraper, overlord of all Bombay, and all India. To reach this eminence, Abraham, we discover, has sacrificed both his son and his beloved wife.

THE NOVEL'S narrative clamour delightfully recalls Midnight's Children. Rushdie does cheekily gather the whole of India within his sprinkle of tales. This can be portentous, but it is not unconvincing. There is a strange and marvellous crowdedness here; the book is like some vast narrative noticeboard, ploughed with the handprints of its irregular messengers. Stories burst, rain, leap over each other. It is occasionally a little sickening, but its very strangeness proposes a different kind of health, something more neurotic and tumultuous than most British readers are used to. In addition to the principal players, such characters as Vasco Miranda, the embittered airport artist; Lambajan Chandiwalla, the one-legged doorman of the Zogoiby household, and Dilly Hormuz, Moraes's studious first love, blow through Rushdie's pages.

This exogamous whirr can be overweening. Rushdie's last novel, The Satanic Verses, with its story of metamorphosis and immigration, became too often a lesson about the importance of post-colonial hybridisation, rather than its engine. Its narrative explosiveness was a kind of programmatic hysteria, designed to push its lesson on us. Sceptics will notice that the narrator of The Moor's Last Sigh not only conveniently combines ethnicities but religions (Jew, Arab, Christian); near the novel's end he has a spell at playing a Hindu fundamentalist gangster.

Moraes often tells us about "India's deep-rooted secularism". Characters warn us that contemporary Hindu politics has made "a single martial deity" of its "many-headed beauty". Moraes delights in his mess of inheritances: he was raised "neither as Catholic nor as Jew. I was both, and nothing: a jewholic-anonymous, a cathjew nut, a stewpot, a mongrel cur. I was — what's the word these days? — atomised. Yessir: a real Bombay mix." The frailty of the prose here is telling: this is an academicism trying to hide itself in the demotic. Though this novel is quieter politically than its immediate predecessor, we are always aware of Rushdie's ideological torque, his twist towards secular pluralism, what he has elsewhere called "Bombayness".

Yet despite these incursions of explicitness, the novel does make a moving case for "Bombayness". Bombay is its real hero, "that super-epic motion picture of a city". This is the exile's sigh for a city he can never return to. Rushdie's evocation of his own lost city moves us not just because of the text's delicate autobiographical watermark, but because he lavishes on this city all his singing powers of description. Here is "the fabulous turbulence of Crawford Market with its frieze by Kipling's dad, with its vendors of chickens both live and plastic"; there is the Royal Barber Shop "where a master barber with a cleft palate offered a circumcision service as a sideline"; and all around are the solecistic advertisements for soaps, garage mechanics and films.

Rushdie's deepest talents may not be magical, but realist. In this novel, at least, his swoops across time and nature seem superfluous or unaffecting: Moraes has a club hand and lives his life at double speed (at 36, the age at which he narrates his novel, he looks like a man of 72), but this seems incidental to his story-telling, which is largely conventional. Rushdie's magic-carpet view of history is magnificent, but it encourages him to sermonise about the importance of such a view. His groundedness is much more appealing, and it animates this wonderful novel's comic energy (Rushdie's portraits of family heroes are marvels of precise observation), and its peculiar, abandoned tenderness.

Doctoring the House

Will Hutton

Ruling Britannia: The Failure and Future of British Democracy
by Andrew Marr
Michael Joseph 372pp £16.99

FOR MOST people, their pension ranks even before their house as their single most important investment decision.

In the past few years, millions have got that decision wrong, switching from the state earnings related pension and company pension schemes to the uncertain world of personal pensions. But at least they could comfort themselves that the idea had been legislated for by government and scrutinised by parliament. They wouldn't allow people to be ripped off, would they?

But they did. The legislation was piloted through its committee stage in the House of Commons by one John Major in February 1986. Labour and Tory MPs alike expressed concerns that high commission charges would eat up pension contributions and make the pensions poor investments, that salesmen would sell a gullible public the wrong pensions policies. The proposals needed to be toughened up. Their "scrutiny" was laughed off by the government machine. Yet every warning has come true; and amendments then rejected as undesirable have subsequently been forced on the Government to limit the spread of a generation of pauperised pensioners. Worse governance could hardly be imagined.

This is but one vignette of many in Andrew Marr's consummately readable and important critique of the British system of government.

For one who serves up page after page of deadly and often amusing indictment, Marr abjures apocalyptic visions of an unreformed future, and is moderate, even hazy, in his remedies. Britain will be diminished if it does not address its constitutional failings — but not damned. So the book settles for asking the House of Commons to challenge the Government more vigorously (how?), for local democracy to be revived (by whom and in whose interest?) and for the Civil Service culture of impartiality to be reaffirmed (is that all?).

Yet his own book dramatises the complex causal relationship between Britain's constitution and political culture that is itself the heart of the problem. Whether it is the centralisation of power in Westminster, the making up of the constitution on the hoof by Murdo Maclean, private secretary to the Government Chief Whip, or the reappearance of the secretive executive in local guise as NHS trusts (another superb passage), Marr demonstrates that it is the deep structures of the unreformed political system that generates just the culture he deplores.

For, as he says, a healthy political community must have the mechansisms to argue with itself intelligently and with clear lines of accountability. This, palpably, plainly, Britain does not have. Whether it is under-resourced select committees or the impoverishment of the prime minister's own private office, British government is characterised by a bumbling Heath Robinson make-do-and-mend approach. The trouble is that there is no protection from its undiluted and centralised powers; this is the state.

In Marr's view, this is part, not all, of the story about the collapse in the standing of Britain's political system. Whether it is Europe, globalised financial markets or environmental pressure groups, real power has fled the House and resides elsewhere. Paradoxically, this denudes the political system of yet more authority and makes it more urgent that it is reformed so that its structures correspond to contemporary necessities.

Here the book makes too many concessions to the fashionable arguments over globalisation and the power of single-issue pressure groups. Modern states retain more scope for autonomous action, even if it is reduced, than Marr allows, and the famed pressure groups have narrow political origins and feet of clay too — as highlighted by Greenpeace's recent apology over its mistaken scientific appraisal of Brent Spar. The state remains the most reliable fountainhead of power around, despite modern trends — which is why the failings of the constitution that Marr diagnoses with such insight are important. It needs, simply, root and branch reform; and this timely book may be one of the catalysts in that change.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Sweet and sour

BRITISH football clubs' European campaign got off to a mixed start last week with joy for some, agony for others. In the first leg of the first round of the Cup Winners' Cup, Everton and Celtic came home with smiles on their faces: Everton beat KR Reykjavik 3-2 and Celtic triumphed over Dinamo Batumi in Georgia by a similar margin.

Everton's comeback to the European stage nearly became an embarrassment as the part-timers of Reykjavik gave the stirring performance that Joe Royle had been dreading. The game was heading for a 2-2 draw when Amokachi, with a marvellous turn and shot from 18 yards, scored the winner three minutes from time.

Two goals by their German striker Andreas Thom gave Celtic their first away win in Europe for nine years and a precious advantage to take back to Glasgow. The game in Batumi was also tied at 2-2 when



Yeboah: hat-trick against Monaco

Thom struck the winner, like the Merseysiders, three minutes from the whistle.

Blackburn Rovers got off to a terrible start in their European Champions' League push when they were beaten at home by a single goal from Spartak Moscow's Sergei Yuran. He flicked the ball over an advancing Tim Flowers from just outside the penalty box just before half-time.

Ray Farford's men turned the heat on after the interval in their attempt to snatch an equaliser, but could not convert the chances they created.

There was also little joy for Rangers, who had Alan McLaren sent off during the second half. Their misery was compounded as Steaua Bucharest grabbed a late winner. McLaren was dismissed along with the home side's Damian Militaru after a 76th minute clash between the pair. That was a bad omen for the visitors and their fate was sealed six minutes from time when Daniel Prodan drove a super volley past Andy Goram.

Clubs taking part in the first leg of the first round of the Uefa Cup did much better, though. Tony Yeboah was Leeds United's hero when he fired a hat-trick against Monaco in Monte Carlo which virtually ensured his team's place in the second round.

Liverpool's Jamie Redknapp handed Roy Evans his first European win as the club's manager when he rifled a 30-yard winner into the net in a packed and near-hysterical Spartak Stadium as Liverpool beat Spartak Vladikavkaz 2-1. The Russian league leaders went ahead with a goal from Mirdzhalol Kasymov in the 21st minute but Steve McManaman quickly equalised.

Manchester United came away with a goalless draw against Rotor Volgograd in the very deep south of Russia and have everything to play for in the second leg.

Not so lucky were Nottingham Forest, who went down 1-2 to Malmo in Sweden. Ian Woan put Forest ahead in the 36th minute but Joakim Persson swept home the equaliser in the 59th minute before Anders Andersson struck a 25-yard winner. Scotland's Raith Rovers defeated Akranes 3-1 at home.

SOUTH AFRICAN athlete Karen Botha, the wife of the former Spingbok Rugby Union captain Naas Botha, has been suspended from the All African Games for using a banned stimulant, and faces an automatic three-month suspension. According to an official of the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa, results will be affected in the long jump, in which Botha won a bronze medal, and the sprint relay, where South Africa won a silver and Botha had competed in the heats. Meanwhile, another South African, cyclist Shawn Lynch, had his appeal against a 12-month suspension for drug abuse rejected and was stripped of the British keirin title he won last month.

ITALIAN rider Luca Cadalora won his second consecutive 500cc motorcycle race on Sunday by taking the Brazilian Grand Prix in Rio de Janeiro, while the Australian runner-up Michael Doohan moved closer to the world title. Cadalora, riding a Yamaha, enjoyed a comfortable victory, leading from start to finish. Doohan, the defending champion, nevertheless increased his championship lead to 26 points over his compatriot Daryl Beattie, who could manage only fourth place, with two races remaining.

BRITAIN'S marathon woman, Liz McColgan, who was teetering on the edge of premature retirement after a series of injuries and operations, won her first international race for nearly three years. The former world 10,000 metres champion won the Great North Run half-marathon at South Shields, ahead of Ethiopia's Fatuma Roba and Portugal's Manuela Machado, the European marathon champion.

HAROLD SHEPHERDSON, the former England football trainer and right-hand man of manager Alf Ramsey during the 1966 World Cup, has died of a heart attack, aged 76.

LEEDS United's Ghanaian star Tony Yeboah is in the habit of eating a Yorkshire pudding before each match ever since he tried it for the first time and went on to score a hat-trick. He notched up another hat-trick in the Uefa Cup, even though he had had to change his routine. Apparently Leeds's hotel in Monte Carlo had never heard of Yorkshire puddings.

Golf British Masters

Torrance lifts title ... and morale

David Davies at Collingtree

SAM TORRANCE, level with a young man of extreme talent on the final hole of the British Masters at Collingtree on Sunday, brought all his considerable experience to bear to win the tournament and £108,330.

He birdied the hole whereas Michael Campbell, third in the Open in July, could only par it after a visit to the bordering lake and had to settle for his second place and his fifth finish in the top five this season.

Torrance, with an 18-under-par 270, has now overtaken Colin Montgomerie at the top of the Volvo Order of Merit, having won £619,138. But, perhaps more importantly, in winning his third event of the season he goes to America with his confidence as high as it has ever been. He will also have with him the baggage of one of the worst Ryder Cup records of any player in either team: won four, lost 13 and halved six in seven matches.

Torrance and Campbell were both 17 under standing on the tee of the 507-yard 18th, with its lake on the left and a pond in front of the green. In Sunday's wet conditions it required two good shots and Campbell failed to produce them. He dragged his drive, which trickled into the water a yard or two behind Torrance's ball. It meant that after a penalty drop he had to play his third before the Scot had hit his second. He had only one way of winning, to hit a wood on to the green and then hope that Torrance could not do the same.

Campbell, off a hanging lie, hit a very good shot which found the putting surface. Torrance, 218 yards away and also on a hanging lie, bravely followed him and now had two putts for the title. The first, from 60 feet, ran two feet past, "that horrible distance which you know you should hole but is so hard when it's for a tournament", but seconds later he was the 1995 British Master.

He was in gleeful mood afterwards. "Top of the Order of Merit, eh? At the age of 42? What about that? It's brilliant. I haven't been as happy since my kids were born."

Montgomerie, Europe's No 1, looked to be in his usual challenging position when he went to the turn in a four-under 32 to move to 15 under, behind only Torrance and Campbell. But the 10th and 11th holes, far from challenging to a player of his calibre, both cost him bogey fives and three more followed for a round of 72.

It was, by one stroke, the highest score he has had in his last 28 rounds, a run going back to the Dutch Open the week after he missed the cut at the Open.

In that time he has had two 64s, two 65s, seven 67s, four 68s and five 69s. He has also been 89 under par and won £458,786, a remarkable achievement which should be recognised for its worth, even though Montgomerie has yet to learn how to deal with the occasional bad rub of the green.

There was an extraordinary, and in many ways unwelcome, symmetry to the scores of three of the remaining Ryder Cup players. Mark James began with two 67s, Severiano Ballesteros with two 69s and Howard Clark with two 70s. Those were all good starts, the firm foundation every professional's weekend needs, and yet Ballesteros and Clark both had 74s on Saturday and Sunday, while James managed only two 72s. Collingtree will not have done much for their confidence.

Meanwhile, the first of what are sure to be many Ryder Cup controversies has erupted with a Sunday newspaper quoting the former captain Tony Jacklin as saying that the best team is not going to Rochester. He said that in his day he was confident he had the 12 best match players in Europe "but this team are not as good as they should be".

Soccer Premiership Liverpool 3 Blackburn Rovers 0

Liverpool add to champions' nightmare

Cynthia Bateman

LIVERPOOL rubbed salt into Blackburn's wounds so zealously that one could almost see Ray Harford's team smarting. Rovers' sanity was preserved only because Roy Evans's side, to his displeasure, eased up after half an hour, limiting the damage to Blackburn's already disturbed psyche.

They are in real trouble now as their season takes on a nightmarish quality after five defeats in six games.

A chastened Harford described it as "another kick in the teeth. We hope this is the bottom of the barrel. But they don't become bad players overnight. It's an old cliché but the majority of it is confidence. It's not a crisis." Oh yes, it is.

The Blackburn hierarchy have been promoting themselves out of sight and Kenny Dalglish, now director of football, was apparently away at a family wedding.

If winning the title removed the chip from the shoulder of the *nouveau riche*, it is now back as a millstone round their necks.

Harford has abandoned the coaching to 44-year-old Derek Fazackerley, a Blackburn player for 17 years. It might have been better to keep the management structure and freshen the workforce.

But, as Blackburn try to sort out what has gone so wrong, they may consider that their sudden downturn is not all their own doing. Last year they had the advantage of meeting some teams who were not quite the finished article: Liverpool are the best example, and Evans had the luxury of criticising his side from a fairly lofty position.

There are those who will watch football for the rest of their lives and never see the quality that Liverpool produced in a scintillating first-half performance of exquisite skill and breathtaking goals. "It is a great result but I feel if we had pushed forward in the second half we may have got more. I am disappointed we took our foot off the pedal," said Evans.

Liverpool's mercurial play now has a point to the pyramid. Collymore's ability to bring the ball out of challenges is matched by awesome goalscoring and gives Liverpool's attack a different dimension.

Redknapp, encouraged by Evans to take speculative snaps at goal, has already justified that advice. He repeated his stunning goal against Vladikavkaz in midweek with a 30-yard shot that followed a corner, bent right and left Flowers diving into its slipstream.

Fowler headed in Jones's cross for the second after 22 minutes.

Seven minutes later Collymore's almost nonchalant strike with his left and unfavoured foot seemed to gather velocity as it sped into the top corner.

It was wonderful stuff and McAteer, making his debut late in the game, already looks the part. Blackburn had no response, except strong lungs and stout hearts which, as against Spartak, proved insufficient. Shearer worked hard but the only supply he got was from Liverpool's Babb playing at left back, who to the intense frustration of his bench, gave the ball away at least five times.

Blackburn's only hope of consolation went when the substitute Makel's long-range shot spun wide and Hendry's effort from a corner was headed off the line.

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP Arsenal 1, West Ham 0; Aston Villa 2, Wimbledon 0; Chelsea 3, Southampton 0; Leeds 1, QPR 3; Liverpool 3, Blackburn 0; Man Utd 3, Bolton 0; Middlesbrough 2, Coventry 1; Newcastle 3, Man City 1; Notts Forest 3, Everton 2; Sheff Wed 1, Tottenham 3. **Leading positions:** 1, Newcastle (played 6, points 15); 2, Man Utd (6-16); 3, Aston Villa (6-13).

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE: First Division Barnsley 2, Sheff Utd 2; Charlton 1, Oldham 1; Crystal Palace 0, Huddersfield 0; Grimsby 1, Port Vale 0; Ipswich 4, Watford 2; Leicester 1, Reading 1; Luton 0, Sunderland 2; Norwich 0, Millwall 0; Portsmouth 2, Derby 2; Southend 2, Wolverhampton 1; Stoke 0, Tranmere 0; West Brom 1, Birmingham 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Leicester (8-17); 2, Millwall (8-17); 3, West Brom (8-15).

Second Division: Bournemouth 0, Crewe 4; Bradford C 3, Bristol C 0; Brentford 1, Walsall 0; Brighton 1, Blackpool 2; Bristol Rovers 1, Swindon 4; Burnley 2, Hull 1; Chesterfield 3, Rotherham 0; Oxford Utd 4, Carlisle 0; Peterborough 1, Wrexham 0; Shrewsbury 0, Notts County 1; Stockport 1, Wycombe 1; Swansea 0, York 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Swindon (8-20); 2, Crewe (7-17); 3, Blackpool (8-16)

Third Division: Barnet 1, Plymouth 2; Bury 1, Cambridge Utd 2; Chester 5, Lincoln 1; Darlington 2, Colchester 2; Doncaster 1, Northampton 0; Exeter 2, Fulham 1; Gillingham 1, Cardiff 0; Leyton Orient 4, Hartlepool 1; Preston 2, Scunthorpe 2; Rochdale 1, Mansfield 1. Scarborough 2, Hereford 2; Torquay 1, Wigan 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Chester (8-18); 2, Gillingham (8-17); 3, Leyton Orient (8-16).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Celtic 1, Motherwell 1; Falkirk 0, Rangers 2; Hibernian 1, Aberdeen 1; Partick 2 Hearts 0; Raith 2, Kilmarnock 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (3-9); 2, Celtic (3-7); 3, Hibernian (3-5).

First Division: Airdrie 3, Greenock Morton 2; Clydebank 1; Dundee Utd 2; Dundee 1, Hamilton 1; St Johnstone 4, Dumbarton 1; St Mirren 0, Dunfermline 2. Leading positions: 1. Dunfermline (5-15); 2, Dundee Utd (5-10); 3. Dundee (5-7).

Second Division: Berwick 3, Stenhousemuir 1; Forfar 2, Queen of South 1; Montrose 0, Clyde 0; Stirling 2, Ayr 0; Stranraer 2, East Fife 0. **Leading positions:** 1, East Fife (5-12); 2. Forfar (5-12); 3, Berwick (5-10).

Third Division: Arbroath 2, Caledonian T 1; Cowdenbeath 0, Brechin 1; Livingston 2, Alloa 0; Queen's Park 1, East Stirling 0; Ross County 5, Albion 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Ross (5-12); 2, Livingston (4-12); 3, Brechin (5-12).

Cricket Britannic Assurance County Championship



High and mighty . . . Captain Dermot Reeve triumphantly bears the championship trophy aloft after Warwickshire overwhelmed Kent at Canterbury PHOTOGRAPH: DAN SMITH

Donald lights the Milky Way

Mike Selvey

WHEN one of the finest fast bowlers of this or any other age describes the dismissal of a hapless tailender in an even more hapless team as "the greatest moment in my career in England", then it is patently obvious that something special has just happened.

The catch to which Neil Smith clung at first slip ended Min Patel's brief stay, gave Allan Donald the 89th wicket of the season and delivered to Warwickshire the county championship for the second year running.

Make no mistake, this has been an exceptional season for an exceptional team, whose record is worth repeating: 14 wins in 17 starts; four of them, including the last against Kent, by an innings, five by 10 wickets, one by nine wickets and three by 91 runs or over. Just one came as a result of the shillyshallying that goes on when a game cannot run its natural course.

Their record is a tribute both to the weather — that allowed games to flow uninterrupted day after sunny day — and to four-day cricket. In such circumstances the best sides flourish.

There is more to it than that, though. Last season Warwickshire lost one game, one fewer than this year, but won only 11. But it was three more than anyone else and they had the title sown up by the start of September.

In all honesty the overall standard of county cricket then was pretty dreadful: this year has been vintage. Middlesex and Northamptonshire have had more wins and exceeded Warwickshire's 1994 points tally, with Lancashire not far behind and considerably closer than Leicestershire were in second place last year. Each of these three sides would have made a worthy champion.

Yet Warwickshire have waltzed their way to the title, winning final matches when sides less versed in doing so might have stumbled with self-doubt at the challenge coming from behind. This is not a side that has just happened. There has been a blueprint that began with Andy Lloyd, the captain, and his coach, Bob Cottam. When Cottam left and the captain retired, it was developed, nurtured and moulded into shape by Bob Woolmer, the most progressive coach in the game, and the hyperactive captain Dermot Reeve.

Reeve — ambitious, cocky and confident — was always one for the big stage. It was Reeve who persuaded Woolmer, his team and cricket at large that the reverse sweep was a legitimate stroke. It was he, too, who seduced batsmen by the sheer calculated ordinariness of his bowling.

But his biggest contribution has been to instill the same spirit of self-belief into his players. His is a democratically run organisation where everyone, from junior to Test star, has his own say and is made responsible for his own livelihood.

For too long cricketers have been treated as juveniles, but Reeve's side flourishes with the responsibility. He has taught them to conquer themselves, to respect everyone but fear no one, to play with freedom and vigour and to enjoy themselves. He is a leader to rank with the best.

Of course it is easy to enjoy life when one is winning. But the good times began before the roll really started. There was a spirit abroad that meant Roger Twose could welcome Brian Lara to Edgbaston as the "second best left-hander in the club". Lara's year, 1994, was phenomenal and a catalyst, but too often, inevitably, the limelight fell on him and his deeds, detracting from the rest.

This season, though, saplings have grown into mature oaks. Ordinary players have become good; good ones very good, and the loss through injury of Moles, Small and Munton has been compensated for beyond dreams. Replacements have slotted in as if to the manner born and the spotlight has flickered around — from Penney's remarkable fielding, to Reeve's nervous energy, and on to Ostler's thumping batting, Neil Smith's improved twirl, and Munton's concentration and intelligence. It is a Milky Way of smaller stars.

Yet through it all shone Donald, gliding in and bowling with searing pace, controlled hostility and nous to gain the maximum result from minimum effort.

AXA Equity & Law League

Can do it, Kent do it

Paul Weaver at Canterbury

KENT, bigger bottlers than Schweppes when the going gets tough, blew another big match but emerged as Sunday League champions after Worcestershire's game against Glamorgan was abandoned; it was the county's first trophy since they won the championship and the Benson & Hedges Cup in 1978.

Kent, Warwickshire and Worcestershire finished with 50 points. Kent and Warwickshire have won 12 matches against Worcestershire's 11 but Kent were awarded the trophy before their ecstatic supporters because of their superior run rate.

It was a bizarre way to win a pot. Kent were being roundly outplayed by Warwickshire at the St Lawrence Ground when their slow left-arm spinner Min Patel, not used in the match, dashed on to the players' balcony to signal that the match at Worcester had been called off.

Matthew Fleming, who was about to bowl to Dougie Brown, aborted his run-up and raised both arms in the air. The crowd, despite a high dosage of Shepherd and Neame, were quick to realise what was happening and the atmosphere was never the same again.

Warwickshire needed 167 to win a match reduced to 35 overs and had struck 66 without loss from the first 10. They then lost their impetus, losing five quick wickets, before Roger Twose and Dermot Reeve saw them home with five wickets and 10 balls to spare.

Kent's nerve had wobbled against the remarkable Reeve's wobbly bowling. Reeve had four for 22 and only Nigel Llong, 51 from 48 balls with six fours, played with authority.

Worcestershire would have been champions if they had beaten Glamorgan but took only two points from an abandoned game. They scored 145 for six from 37.1 overs, with Philip Weston making 63 from only 79 deliveries with three fours and two leg-side sixes, but rain washed out Glamorgan's response.

The Sunday League title hardly compensates for another desperatly disappointing championship season for Kent. They finished bottom for the second time following their defeat by Warwickshire on Saturday.

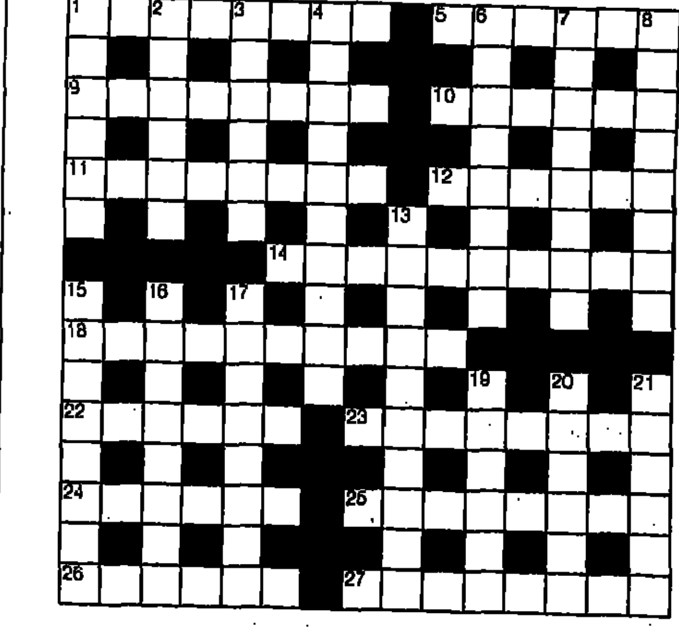
Mark Benson, whose leadership is uninspiring, could become the ninth county captain to go this year and the coach, Daryl Foster, has been a disappointment, although with two years left on his contract the club is unlikely to pay him off.

Final table

	P	W	L	D	Nr	Pts
Kent (3)	17	12	4	0	1	**50**
Warwicks (1)	17	12	4	0	1	**50**
Worcester (2)	17	11	3	1	2	**50**
Lancs (4)	17	11	5	0	1	**46**
Essex (17)	17	10	6	1	0	**42**
Glamorgan (7)	17	8	6	0	3	**38**
Leicester (10)	17	8	7	0	2	**36**
Derbyshire (8)	17	7	6	1	3	**36**
Surrey (6)	17	7	8	0	2	**32**
Sussex (15)	17	7	8	0	2	**32**
Notts (11)	17	7	9	0	1	**30**
Yorkshire (5)	17	7	9	0	1	**30**
Northants (13)	17	6	8	1	2	**30**
Somerset (16)	17	5	9	0	3	**26**
Gloucester (18)	17	5	10	0	2	**24**
Durham (9)	17	4	9	1	3	**24**
Middlesex (14)	17	4	11	0	2	**20**
Hampshire (12)	17	3	12	1	1	**16**

1994 positions in brackets

Cryptic crossword by Orlando



Across

1 Fish with jam or wild mustard (8)
5 Get cast adrift in boat (6)
9 Your lie may be imaginary (8)
10 Gasteropod allowed one member for ingestion (6)
11 Island holding non-skid fabric (8)
12 Thrash the French and sound pleased if repulsed (6)
14 Clue I made old-fashioned or made clear (10)
18 Lying about account, fix debts (10)
22 Go by a piano otherwise engaged? (6)
23 Base-line crossed by islanders (8)
24 Attempt to carry one pound in hat (6)
25 Man of Rome is out about outstanding performers (8)
26 Message from landlord on telephone about a half of bitter (6)
27 Some poetry about a single painter (8)

Down

1 Grapple with centilitre measure (6)
2 Dormant snake outside shelter (6)
3 From the gunwales bos'n sees an island (6)
4 Sing a carol, playing an instrument (3,7)
6 Outlaws in gangs, carrying equipment (8)
7 The roughness of a form of pyrites (8)
8 Stationery used by writers and poets, perhaps (8)
13 The case for the prosecution? (10)
15 Upset me with nuts and cheese (8)
16 Girl to please old recorder (8)
17 Second thoughts about a fur? Thats's good enough (8)
19 Italian artist, American soldier, German emperor (6)
20 Previously in favour of taking buzzer out (6)
21 Pollute gorge (6)

Last week's solution

N	O	S	E	B	A	G		W	A	R	W	I	C	K
A		T		R		U		O		U		S		I
S	H	I	R	E		S	T	R	A	T	F	O	R	D
E		T		A		T		T		H		B		O
B	A	C	K	S	T	O	T	H	E		W	A	L	L
Y		H		T				A		M		R		O
				B	U	L	L	B	A	I	T	I	N	G
B		G		O		O		I		C		O		Y
O	I	L	A	N	D	W	A	T	E	R				
N		A		E		L				O		F		R
D	O	Z	E		G	Y	P	S	O	P	H	I	L	A
S		U		B		B		T		H		L		G
M	I	N	N	E	S	O	T	A		O	F	L	A	G
A		O		A		R		F		N		E		E
N	A	V	A	R	I	N		F	R	E	T	T	E	D